

THE THOMIST

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LIVING THOMISM



I. THE COMMON PHILOSOPHY

NO one, it may be imagined, would be more surprised than St. Thomas himself, at the use of the name Thomism to designate the common philosophy (*philosophia communis*) worked out collectively through the centuries. This perennial philosophy, however, which had a long history before St. Thomas summed it up and gave new expression to it in his own unique way, may be less inappropriately called after Thomas for a number of reasons. St. Thomas was a great innovator, courageous enough to go against the pseudo-Augustinian and pseudo-Aristotelian currents of his time. This he did not by breaking with tradition but by transforming it. So selfless was his presentation of the truth of things that no personal idiosyncracies color or distort their expression.

True to St. Thomas' insight that "the study of philosophy is that we may know not what men have taught but what the truth of things is," Thomism does not go back to Thomas but advances deeper into things. Not ancient or neo, but current and living, it is ready to answer the most crucial philosophical questions of today. Thomism makes its appeal not in the name

of St. Thomas or any of his great successors, but by reason of its adequation to the real with which it is in fertile contact including every kind of reality, material and cultural, human and divine. It is philosophically alive to all things, in their manyness and oneness, diversity and sameness, becoming and being, change and permanence, existence and essence, unity, truth, goodness, beauty.

II. NOT A SYSTEM

Always open to further explorations of reality, Thomism has within itself the challenge to deepen and perfect itself. This openness to all of reality also guards it against the sin of intellectual pride of even pretending to be a finished system of philosophy. The very notion of a closed system is indeed a negation of the true nature of philosophy. Might not philosophy today have been much less discredited, had its overrationalistic system builders from Descartes through Spinoza, Hegel, and others been modest enough not to have attempted to set up rival systems of the universe? This is not to deny the constructive genius that went into the making of some of these philosophical systems long since wrecked by reality. Nor is it to fail to appreciate some of the scattered truths still clinging to these magnificent ruins, truths which Thomism can keep alive within its own organism. Like St. Thomas, who confessed the anguish he experienced for his erring adversaries, the Thomist has compassion for the philosophers who had the genius to err greatly. For error, too, plays a role in the drama of philosophy which affords its special kind of catharsis. Those engaged in the perilous adventure of sounding the ontological depths of being are warned not to take the roads which lead to blind alleys or into pitfalls. By meeting the challenge, truth can be possessed more consciously and critically.

The defeat of the system builders who violated the nature of philosophy by breaking down its limits, confirms the truth that although a perfect work of reason, philosophy is only one way of knowing reality, and that even when brought to its highest achievement it will not displace the other fundamental modes of

knowing—the way of common sense, the empirical sciences, the wisdoms of theology and mysticism. Philosophy does not displace, nor swallow up monopolistically, the other ways of knowing so carefully distinguished in order to be integrated properly. Sufficiently critical and aware of itself, philosophical reason does not shut itself off arbitrarily from what is either above or below it, the suprarational or infrarational, the deliverances of objective sense data charged with meaning, the vital powers, inclinations, tendencies, and even the infrasensible depths of the unconscious. Not fixated narcissitically upon itself, a healthy reason is socialized enough to live its own life fully in conjunction with others, from the lowliest motions of matter to the superactuality of that which language can only express negatively, yet which is so rich in positive meaning, as the unmoved, immaterial, infinite, and the like.

III. RELATION TO THE EMPIRICAL SCIENCES

Is it any wonder, then, that the physical sciences revolted so violently against the preposterous claims of the philosophical systems from which they too had been excluded? This reaction was carried by the Positivists to the nihilistic extreme of denying philosophy altogether, following as it were the defiance pattern proverbially expressed as cutting off one's nose to spite one's face. Such contradictory attempts were foredoomed to failure. In denying philosophy by claiming the sciences as the only valid knowledge of reality, were not the Positivists passing beyond the limits of the empirical sciences and poaching upon philosophical grounds? This extraempirical denial of philosophy at the same time affirms it, though giving witness to an erroneous philosophy. This is like the character in Dostoyevsky's novel *The Possessed*, who to deny God took his own life to prove that he was an omnipotent being. There was an immanent logic in the aberration that led to the Positivist catechism, and it is not surprising that its author, Auguste Comte, who set up the religion of humanity in the temples of which he was also to be worshipped, attempted to drown himself in his garden pool.

Strangely enough, the verbal denial of philosophy usually substitutes the worse tyranny of a false theology. Neither philosophy nor theology can be repressed without serious consequences. Cut off from their critically conscious life in the mind, they continue to express themselves in a disguised form in the sciences where they do not properly belong. There are, alas, too many instances of scientists who speak, not only philosophical nonsense, but theological gibberish as well. It is hardly adequate to dismiss, with embarrassment, their absurd *obiter dicta* as unbecoming to a scientist, since these may have destructive effects on science itself, which has to be defended, not only against its overenthusiastic worshippers, but also against those who deny it for the wrong reasons because their false expectations have been disappointed.

It is the task of philosophy to justify noetically the kind of knowledge validly acquired through the empirical sciences. In no way does philosophy condescendingly regard the empirical investigation of phenomena, but, on the contrary, it demonstrates how indispensable this investigation is in the case of the properties of material things, whose essences are so deeply embedded in matter that they cannot be sufficiently disengaged to be explored philosophically in their essential structures but demand the kind of explanation which only the physical sciences can yield. Were the physical sciences to achieve knowledge of everything that can be known about the parts which they investigate so patiently, there would still be the need to know how these parts are essentially related to the whole and how the essences of whole things are interrelated in the universe and in even greater wholes. To cite only one example, the careful investigations of the organism by the biologists, physiologists, neurologists, reflexologists, psychologists of various schools, anthropologists, clinicians, psycho-somatic researchers, etc., have brought to the fore the urgent necessity for a genuinely philosophical integration, as may be witnessed by the many conflicting interpretations of the monistic energists, parallelists, interactionists, organicists, etc. The scientific explanation, say

of the physico-chemical and other conditions of the living organism, or of matter, in no way dispenses with, but calls for, the deeper philosophical exploration of the essence of life or matter. The sciences and philosophy of nature ask different questions of the same material being and get different answers which do not nullify but complement and supplement each other. Were the empirical investigation of phenomena continued indefinitely, it would never become philosophical by some mysterious leap, nor can it ever displace the need for the kind of explanation which only the philosophy of nature can provide. The debate between philosophy and the sciences, complicated still further by the mathematization which has invaded so many of the sciences, and even philosophy, could be led in the direction of a satisfactory solution by the Thomist philosophy of nature. This philosophy of nature has the principles whereby it could integrate the new materials brought forward by the remarkable progress of the physical sciences, but it still lags far behind in the detailed elaboration and application of these principles.

This lack of a more fully developed philosophy of inanimate and animate nature, however, is amply compensated for by the depth of Thomistic metaphysics, which penetrates deeper than the physical and mathematical levels of being and does not depend upon them. But before descending into these depths, something should be said about the relationship between philosophy and *common sense*.

IV. RELATION TO COMMON SENSE

Thomist philosophy does not look down upon, but justifies, what is valid in the pre-scientific knowledge of *common sense*. This is carefully distinguished from the prejudices, irrational beliefs, and unfounded opinions usually masquerading under its name. *Common sense* refers specifically to the cluster of primordial certainties which come into play with the spontaneous operation of sense and reason in their native vigor. There is, first of all, the primitive certainty given through the senses of the actual existence of material things. Though errors are

frequently made in the order of sense knowledge concerning the sensible properties of material things, there is the spontaneous certainty about their actual existence seized directly and immediately through intuition. Unlike philosophy, *common sense* cannot justify this certainty, but rightly opposes its denial.

To demand proof of the actual existence of something outside one's self, or of one's own existence, is to betray the direct evidence of this sensible intuition; it is to ask for proof of that which does not require proof and cannot be proved because it is immediately evident and directly given. To demand a demonstration of everything, or even of that which is self-evident, is not a sign of wisdom. If the more subtle sophistry should be proposed, "But what if I am only dreaming that I am experiencing actual things!" even *common sense* might point out that the very question presupposes knowledge of the difference between dreaming and being awake. Long before Descartes, St. Augustine refuted the sophistical arguments of the sceptics of his day with his "*Si fallor sum*" (If I err, I must exist).

Common sense also upholds the self-evident principles of the intellect, which are expressed logically as the principles of identity and of noncontradiction. Any attempt to prove them would be contradictory. These principles are used by *common sense* nonscientifically, without being critically conscious of them, and without being able to defend them. Nor can *common sense* demonstrate its affirmations based on the related principle of causality—concerning free will, the existence of God, and the like—because it holds its knowledge nondemonstratively, without being able to establish the right causes, reasons, and connections. This is the task of philosophy which is able to use these principles critically and consciously. A philosophy which fails to recognize that all its perfectly worked out proofs or demonstrations rest on certain basic intuitions will finally destroy its very foundations. Philosophy will wither at its very roots if it alienates itself from the vital certainties of *common sense*.

V. ITS EXISTENTIALISM

In the apparently simple enunciation, "being is being," or, "whatever is, is," the same thing is not repeated but new meanings are unfolded; being in the first instance refers to existence, and in the second to essence. This is to say that whatever exists has its own essence, or that being is an actually or possibly existing essence, a dynamic act of existence whereby a static essence (a necessary, unchanging, intelligible structure) carries out its act of existence with an inviolable metaphysical energy, and stands outside of its causes infinitely removed from nothingness. Being is grasped by the intellect not only in its essence but also in its existence pole, the essence-existence polarity found in the ontological structure of any entity.

Far from being tautological, the principle of identity has an inexhaustible metaphysical fecundity. The intellect is not condemned to the sterility of rotating platonically about static essences, luminous as these intelligible structures are, but reaches out to encompass their dynamic acts of existence (actual and possible), the fathomless wells of existence irradiated by them. In its act traditionally called "simple apprehension," the intellect does abstract essences which are present to it as meanings in the order of signification abstracted from the order of existence, exercised actually or possibly. Innumerable essential aspects or intelligible determinations, substantial or accidental, are abstracted from, or considered apart from, their concrete subjects of existence. Thus for example, from the actually existing table are abstracted the innumerable objects of thought: tableness, rectangularity, brownness, smoothness, hardness, etc. They are torn apart, so to speak, from a single unitary being. In the dynamic act of the judgment, the intellect moves from the plane of signified essences to the plane of exercised existence; a subject exercising possible existence, to which the predicate is united, is pushed forward in the intellect; what has been torn apart by the intellect, however, is joined together again. The judgment is

true if what is put together or separated in possible existence is found together or separated in actual existence. The truth of the judgment always refers to existence and is ultimately resolved in the sensible.

This emphasis on existence has important consequences for philosophy, even affecting the conception of its nature. The philosophical enterprise would be vitiated in its deepest tendencies towards knowing existence, were the philosopher not wide awake to existence through his intellect vitally conjoined to his sensibility. (A sleeping or dreaming philosopher would be a contradiction in terms!) Far from succumbing to the temptation of remaining aloof in a barren contemplation of essences, the philosopher should be drawn by existence to descend from these heights and explore their existential depths. He not only explores the essence of any being but goes on to show how it is realized analogically in existence, that is, proportionately to the essence, nature, or subject in which it is found. This approach is radically different from the one exemplified recently by a professor of philosophy who, when asked about his analysis of what constitutes a just war, replied, "I am not interested as a philosopher in a particular war but only in the general principles of any just war." Such a "de-existentialized" handling of essences is a hollow mockery of genuine philosophy, and violates both the essences which it clasps to death and the existences from which they have been eviscerated. Thus, for example, in considering man, the philosopher will be profoundly aware of how the essence of man is kept from realizing itself by those concrete conditions of existence, economic, political, social, cultural, religious, which prevent him from exercising his rationality, freedom, dignity as a person, etc. So, too, human personality could not be properly realized without an existential understanding. Nor, for that matter, could the unity of man, whose essence is composed of rationality and animality, be satisfactorily explained without showing how the act of existence holds together actually in undividedness, or unity, what is potentially divisible.

The Thomistic emphasis on existence is not to be confused with some of the so-called existential philosophies which present mutilated segments arrived at viscerally, emotionally, and in the most devious, anti-intellectual ways. They get at existence through vital impulsions, will-acts, moral loyalties, anguish in mediating on death (another's, of course). The thought of death is supposed to elicit a vivid awareness of existence, of how contingent beings hover over an abyss of nothingness. While Thomism does not deny that some of these vicarious experiences may help in shaking certain individuals out of their metaphysical lethargy, it shows how inadequate they are unless the intellect is also awakened to a proper metaphysical intuition of being. This is not to be confused with the sensible intuition of the being concretized in sensible things. Nor is it arrived at through the kind of abstraction employed by the logician, a total abstraction of being grasped in a blanketlike and contentless way as the widest logical class, greatest in extension and least in comprehension. Such an empty concept of mental or unreal being hardly differs from the concept of nonbeing, and it is not surprising to find the two identified, as in Hegel and others who confuse the radically distinct logical and ontological orders.

The philosopher grasps real being through a formal abstraction which seizes the essential determinations constituting being as such. There are different levels or depths of formal abstraction or penetration into reality. On the physical level, the intellect abstracts from individual matter and focuses its attention upon the sensible, mobile, changing qualities of being, investigated by philosophy of nature and the sciences from different points of view. On the mathematical level, the intellect abstracts from both the individual and sensible matter and penetrates to the intelligible matter bound up with quantity, extension, number, etc. On the metaphysical level, the intellect abstracts from all matter, individual, sensible, intelligible, and penetrates much deeper to seize being not as mobile, quantified, living, but as being. In other words, metaphysics does not concern itself

with what a being must be in order to be material, living, and the like, but with what a being must be in order to be at all, with being in so far as it is being, with being as such. It renders explicit, and by way of demonstration, what the intellect grasps at first implicitly and confusedly through its abstractive intuition of being. Metaphysics explicates that to be is to be an existing essence (either actual or possible), one or undivided, true or adequate to an intellect, good or desirable in itself and to others, beautiful or that which is delightfully apprehensible. It not only explores these coextensive features of reality, called the transcendentals because they are not confined to any one category or class but are found wherever there is being, but also investigates the fundamental modes of being, the categories of substance and accidents. Though fortunately being cannot be defined, the metaphysician can say what it is and bring to light progressively what he wrests from its mysterious depths.

Through the metaphysical recognition of the analogy of proportionality, so carefully differentiated from the analogy of attribution, metaphorical, mathematical, pre-scientific and other kinds of analogy, the sameness and difference, the diversity and proportional unity of all being can be grasped simultaneously. In this way only can the errors be avoided which hold that being is either univocal or equivocal, the various forms of pantheistic, idealistic, or materialistic monism, which reduce all being into one monolithic block, whether divine, mental, or material, and the various forms of radical pluralism which break being down and pulverize it into disconnected chunks without anything in common. In this way the one and the many are reconciled not only between different kinds of being but also within beings composed of essence and existence, potentiality and actuality, or of substantial form and prime matter if they are material.

The affirmation of being includes the reality of becoming, whereby a changing being strives to actualize its potentialities. The insatiable craving, so to speak, of ever restless matter in potency to all forms can be quieted only by actuality-giving

form. Form not only communicates actuality to the matter which it organizes from within by making it to be the kind it is, but also energizes it toward achieving itself more fully in existence. The realization of form is often obstructed by the opacity and resistance of matter, yet such beings are real to the degree that their forms have realized themselves in their matter, or in so far as they have actualized their potentialities, or to the degree that the essences of material beings have realized themselves in existence. They also have a relative nonbeing to the degree that they have not achieved the form or actuality their natures require.

Authentic existentialism enables one to appreciate the metaphysical drama of how composite beings seek to overcome in themselves the gap between their essence and existence, potentiality and actuality, and, if they are material beings, between their matter and form. They struggle to realize themselves more fully in existence, to achieve more unity, truth, goodness, beauty, more substantiality and accidental being, while at the same time resisting the pull towards nonbeing, multiplicity, falsity, evil, and ugliness. But even at the successful conclusion of this drama, the gap will not be completely overcome and the composite beings will still carry, as do the singly-composed immaterial beings, the metaphysical brand of all contingent beings, which points to the Being whose essence is existence, self-subsisting actuality, indivisible unity, absolute truth, goodness, beauty, and all else that He is infinitely.

VI. THE THEME OF BEAUTY

Here we will unfold only a few of the themes of the threefold requirements of the beautiful: integrity or perfection, right proportion or harmony, and radiance.

Integrity or perfection is to be understood not in a moral sense, but in its primary ontological meaning. Indeed, for any philosopher gifted with a metaphysical intuition of being, actual existence is the highest integrity and perfection. If by integrity is meant wholeness of completeness, or if its meaning is extended

to include unity, then these too as well as all the co-transcendentals united in beauty should be rendered ontologically in their various analogical realizations. A particular torso of Venus, for example, though a fragment, may have the unity, wholeness, completeness, perfection, or integrity proper to the nature of a torso, and hence be beautiful to the degree that it possesses these as well as other co-ingredients of beauty.

Proportion or harmony is far removed from the superficial meanings of symmetry, assonance, and the like usually associated with it. Each being has its due proportion or harmony in so far as its confluent parts are determined by its form. This may require assymetry or dissonance as well as the more accepted kinds of proportion and harmony. The work of art has its own end, determined by the art form to which the artist gives its intelligible or sensible matter, and it is important to consider first how the work of art conforms to its own end rather than to that of the beholder. The confluent arrangement of parts in accordance with an end is in a deeper sense the ontological order or good of a thing, for each being realizes its good in so far as it conforms to its intrinsic end or purpose, as well as to the ends or purposes of others. In thus seeking to achieve its end, each being seeks its good. To the degree that each being is good, that is, desirable, suitable or agreeable to its own nature or essence, conforming to the purpose or end determined by its form, it has its due proportion or harmony.

Radiance is the shining out of all the transcendentals united in the beautiful. More specifically, it is the intelligible radiance permeating the whole of a being, the splendor of form irradiating it from within, the light of ontological truth, the knowable, adequating it to an intellect. So dazzling in itself as to be blinding to human eyes, radiance illuminates the darkness of matter so that material beings may enlighten man's intellect through his senses. The beauty of the splendor of form lighting up the integrity, perfection, proportion, harmony, and their equivalents, of a material being can be enjoyed without abstraction and without the elaboration of concepts, though the latter may be germinally present.

Though the question of what constitutes the aesthetic emotion has been given too much attention at the expense of more important aspects, some of its distinguishing characteristics should be pointed out. It is highly regrettable that the profound hints given by St. Thomas—long before Freud and others dared to descend into these infrarational realms and explore by the light of reason such explosive material as the emotions—have not been more fully developed psychologically, and that no one as yet has attempted to transpose some of these insights into the field of aesthetics. Such studies would certainly bring out, among other things, how man's reason can penetrate and humanize the emotions following rather than preceding its activity in relationship to the aesthetic object.

Broadly speaking, those things are called beautiful the vision or apprehension of which placate. This strikes the two interblending notes helping to explain how man's cognitive and appetitive movements are brought into repose by the beautiful. Vision not only signifies the act of the sense of sight, but, by reason of its worth and certainty, it is applied to the cognition of all the other senses as well as to intellectual cognition. Any cognition in the practical or speculative order may bring some kind of satisfaction, but the cognition of the beautiful brings a special kind of satisfaction. To comprehend this, it is important to ascertain how aesthetic apprehension differs noetically from other fundamental ways of knowing, the scientific, philosophical, theological, and mystical. Here only a few general and quite superficial characteristics will be mentioned regarding these different modes of cognition and their respective ways of abstracting and expressing their truths.

A truth of the empirical sciences, good as far as it goes, is always of partial aspects of correlated phenomena abstracted or disengaged from a whole thing. This only partially satisfies the intellect seeking to penetrate still further to the essences of whole things. Philosophical truth gives greater satisfaction to the intellect, but the appetitive powers may be left unappeased. While more perfect than philosophy in its content but not in its

mode of knowing, the theological knowledge of supernatural truths accepted on faith leaves the intellect still desiring to see God. The mystical experience properly understood as the experiential awareness of God as He is in Himself, which can be had only through the infused gift of wisdom and through the connaturality of love, fulfills the whole man most completely.

Mystical contemplation offers, analogically of course, with all due proportions regarded, and in a radically different way, certain resemblances to the aesthetic experience. An aesthetic truth is not abstracted or disengaged or considered apart from the thing in which it is realized, but is seen or apprehended in the whole thing in which it presents itself, and satisfies man in his cognitive and appetitive powers and their accompanying emotions. This does not imply that the artist does not abstract, in the manner proper to the arts, from larger wholes in nature those aspects expressed by him through the appropriate kind of aesthetic symbols, but this should be discussed in connection with the meaning of art. It is important to explore more specifically how the self is integrated by the different kinds of whole objects presented in different degrees and known accordingly. Concerning this, only one observation will be given here. What is known aesthetically has its own kind of universality differing from that of philosophy and the sciences, and does not primarily lead outward to further knowledge of the connections between the truths of things. Aesthetic knowing is concretized in the subject, through the object, and leads inwards to a further knowledge of certain truths of the self and other selves and the relations between selves and things. More generally, any truth is the conformity of intellect and things, but an aesthetic truth is a desirable conformity which visibly delights, in which man's cognitive and appetitive powers and their accompanying emotions are integrated. The true is any adequation of intellect and thing, but the truth of a beautiful thing is an agreeable, satisfying, gratifying, joyful, lovable, reposeful, peaceful, tranquil adequation. Truth, or that in things which can be known, is seen. Beauty, or that in things which makes us enjoy knowing them, is seen and loved.

Like the true, the beautiful is a visible good of cognition, but it differs not only from the true but also from the good. In that the beautiful placates upon being seen or apprehended it is a good, for anything is a good, simply speaking, that quiets appetite, which is a kind of movement towards a thing. But although the beautiful is akin to the good in quieting appetite, and also because it shares the same metaphysical foundation in that both flow from the form of a thing, the beautiful is not to be confused with the good from which it differs. The good placates the appetite, stirred by it as a final cause, when it is partaken of through direct acquisition and possession. The beautiful, operating as a formal cause, placates by being seen, apprehended, cognized, or contemplated. The good as such is anything that is desirable, lovable, delectable in itself and to others. The beautiful is only the desirableness, lovableness, and delectability of apprehensible being, which is beheld and contemplated for its own sake. In relationship to the good, one is a direct participator, a consumer, even of those goods which are inconsumable. In relationship to the beautiful, one is a knower, a contemplator. In satisfying appetite the good gladdens. The beautiful gladdens by illuminating cognition.

The psychological characterization of the beautiful coincides with the ontological description of its threefold requirements. Yet these two converging descriptions, which say so much about what the beautiful is, strictly speaking do not define it, by delimiting it within the barriers of a genus and the addition of a specific difference. This cannot be done, for the addition of any specific difference would itself have to be beautiful, and the transcendental dimensions of the beautiful cannot be narrowed into a genus. Beauty cannot be restricted to a special category, because it is as wide and deep as being itself and all its coextensive transcendentals. Like them, beauty is indefinable, but presents its own evidence so superabundantly that it spills over all its conceptualizations in analogical profusion. That beauty lights up the other transcendentals in no way diminishes or subordinates its own distinctive light but en-

hances its intrinsic importance known and loved for its own sake in its fugitive or lasting expressions wherever it shines out analogically, whether in the lowest degree of being or the highest.

VII. RELATION TO OTHER WISDOMS

Although it was St. Thomas who first clearly distinguished faith and reason, each of which sought to swallow up the other before his genius tamed them, and taught them to live together in harmony so that by mutually benefiting one another they could develop fully in their respective spheres of theology and philosophy, there are still some who out of ignorance, which by now is culpable, dismiss a thousand years of rich philosophical development because they wrongly accuse it of being the handmaid of theology. Philosophy in its own sphere is never a handmaid but is its own mistress; it is the perfect work of reason, more perfect than theology, not in its content, but in its mode of knowing because it can demonstrate its knowledge. Philosophy is a handmaid only in theology, where it is employed in making explicit all that is contained implicitly in the revealed data accepted on faith. This has a twofold content: certain truths which could never be attained by unaided reason, such as what God is essentially, and which are infinitely above reason; truths which reason could attain by its own light but in fact never did without an admixture of error before they were revealed, such as the existence of God and some of His attributes which can be reached philosophically. Nor is philosophy less its own mistress in its own domain because it recognizes that its truths, arrived at independently, cannot contradict the truths of faith. If anything, philosophy has benefited in more ways than one in recognizing the guiding star illuminating the darkness of man's knowledge in such matters. Higher than the theological knowledge of God as revealed, seen darkly as in a glass, is mystical wisdom. This is an experiential awareness of God as He is in Himself and cannot be had without the infused gift of wisdom and the connaturality of love.

The existential approach explains how Christian philosophy is possible. Philosophy is not regarded in its essence aspect only but also as it is exercised existentially in a concrete subject of operation, man. Strictly specified by its object, the irreducible nature of philosophy has its own autonomy. Yet it benefits by being exercised in a subject enjoying the radically changed conditions of existence effected gratuitously by the life of grace and the infused intellectual and moral virtues and gifts, in whom they mutually strengthen each other and are integrated into a vital synergy. Far from suffering any diminution from such an interchange, the intrinsic purity and autonomy of philosophy come into their own more richly.

It is true that many of the philosophical truths abounding in St. Thomas' writings are delivered much too rapidly, as is to be expected from the theological setting in which they make their appearance. The Thomist philosopher is challenged to develop further these fecund insights and to give them a more fully elaborated expression in a philosophical body of its own, with its own rhythm of growth and way of putting questions, and really distinct from the theological matrix in which they were unfolded. Unlike the theologian who glances swiftly at the things to which he descends from the heights of God, the philosopher pays a different kind of attention to things, which are his starting point. He lingers much longer with them, puts other questions to them, listens attentively to all their creaturely articulations, and patiently explores them in their own light and in the light of his senses and reason by which he slowly ascends to the divine heights. The truth of things demands a much slower expression and a different order of presentation in a distinctly philosophical work properly conscious of itself and its method. In thus seeking to be carried no longer in the arms of theology but to walk on its own philosophical legs, Thomist philosophy is repaying in small part its debt to St. Thomas. In being able to renew its own conditions of existence, this philosophy is indeed perennial.

VIII. SOCIETAL IMPLICATIONS

Thomist existentialism provides an adequate philosophy of man and society, a social and individual ethics, fully constituted in its principles, as well as a philosophy of politics and law which can come into their fullness and depth. Because of the limits of this essay only a few of the themes in social philosophy will be briefly indicated.

Implicit in the affirmation that man by nature is a social and political animal is the recognition that the social is much wider than the political. Man can be depoliticalized and still remain man, but no human being can be desocialized and still remain human. Social relations extend much further than the political and reach out beyond the boundaries of the state, which is only one of the organized forms of human association, to embrace the international society of other nations and above that, to a supranational society transcending the whole temporal order.

The state which derives its political authority from the whole people is limited by natural law and by the laws which are made by the whole people and their representatives. Law, to which both rulers and ruled are subject, governs. Under certain conditions the people have the right to revolt against an unjust, tyrannical regime. Men are not bound necessarily to one political order but may freely construct other ones. Politics, as the work of experience and art, effects a unity of order; as the work of prudence, it is intrinsically related to ethics.

The end of civil society is the common good embracing the material and moral, that is the human, well-being of all its members, their happiness, which cannot be achieved without justice and the other moral virtues. The common good takes precedence over the individual good when the respective goods belong to the same order. When the good of the individual is of a higher order, as in the case of his freedom and spiritual perfection as a person, then the common good of the political order must be subordinated to the individual good of the

spiritual order. Man as an individual is part of the political whole, but as a person he rises above it. Subordination does not mean suppression but vivification in which the political can come more fully into its own. The political order is not only an instrumental means in relation to the spiritual, it is an end in its own order, an intermediate end in relation to the higher. It has its own relative autonomy with its own specific structure and laws.

Not to see the principles of political philosophy in relation to existence results in the failure to take into account the changed existential conditions to which they must be proportioned. This failure may explain the nostalgic yearning on the part of some to return to mediaeval forms, or even further back to pagan ones. The shock they might experience were they thrown back to the times when some of these forms were imperfectly realized under the conditions which existed then, might be a lesson for those who wish to undo the rich existential developments of the centuries in which so much good has emerged along with the bad. Equally dangerous is the opposite reaction on the part of those who are so lost in the violent movements of existence that they fail to reach its underlying principles, and claim that not only have conditions changed radically but so too have the principles. This denial of unchanging principles leads to the glorification of blind empirical groping and the opportunism of the moment. Derived originally from the practical order of reality, these ethico-political principles should be returned to existence to build a better political and social order. An existential philosophy need not be helpless before the problems of its own times.

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THE MORALITY OF IMPERFECTIONS

543

I. THE QUESTION

A SURVEY of our modern manuals of moral theology reveals a curious fact about their teaching on moral imperfections. The fact is that their explanations are generally inconsistent. Briefly, they amount to this: A positive moral imperfection is not a sin but it displeases God.¹ The solitary exception to this manner of solving the problem is to be found in the later editions of Vermeersch.² This open departure from the beaten path of moralists on the part of Vermeersch warrants an investigation.

The whole question concerning moral imperfections resolves itself to this: Must there be granted, between full-fledged sin and morally perfect action, the existence of another, third type of moral act differing from both of the above-mentioned types and meriting in all theological rigor the title, "positive moral imperfection," which the authors generally reserve for it?

The authors conceive of a moral imperfection, not as a positive privation of perfection due to morals which would certainly involve sin, and not as a pure negation of perfection in no way due to morals which would imply material defects lying beyond the sphere of formal morality, but rather as a third sort of imperfection lacking a certain plenitude or superabundance of perfection which it might have realized and which we normally expect to find realized in virtuous men. This imperfection is sometimes identified with the deliberate choice

¹ Noldin, S. J., *Theol. Mor.*, I, n. 289 (22a Edit., 1934, Oeniponte): ". . . per se non sunt peccata attamen displicent Deo . . ."

Cf. also, Genicot, S. J., *Theol. Mor.* (Genicot-Salsmans), I, n. 149, n. 316; Slater, S. J., *Theol. Mor.*, I, p. 82 (6th Edit., New York, 1928); Lehmkuhl, S. J., *Theol. Mor.*, I, n. 109; II, n. 360 (11a Edit., Friburgi Brisgoviae, 1910); Aertnys-Damen, *Theol. Mor.*, I, n. 233 bis (Edit., 1932).

² Vermeersch, S. J., *Theol. Mor.*, I, n. 440 (Edit., 1934): ". . . putamus deliberatam omissionem boni melioris ab aliqua culpa vacare non potest."

of a morally inferior good and sometimes with a mere omission, the omission of a better good, of a divine inspiration or counsel of perfection. But our moralists hasten to distinguish between the abstract and concrete state of moral goods. The better good, accepted in the abstract, is not always the individual's better good considered here and now as surrounded by concrete circumstances. The authors, therefore, wish to confine their moral imperfection to the concrete order of things, consequently to a choice of the lesser good or to an omission of the greater good considered in the concrete.

Not every choice of the lesser good or omission of the counsels, even when envisaged in the concrete, measures up to the demands of our problem, for the authors insist upon the full title, "positive moral imperfection." To fully realize this final condition of "positive" moral imperfection a concrete choice or omission must have fallen upon matter against which we are positively urged or invited. It must be a concrete choice of the lesser good in the face of a positive impulse or inclination towards the better good also accepted concretely. It must be brought to the attention of a certain individual, not merely that this particular alternative seems undoubtedly to be the better good for him here and now in these surroundings, but what is more, that he has a special attraction for this alternative in the sense that his own reason seems to counsel this choice in preference to the other alternative. He must be aware that this might be some movement of grace prompting him or an inspiration of the Holy Ghost persuading him to accept this better good. Hence the positive moral imperfection may be described as an omission of the better good or a work of counsel in the face of one's own reason urging the opposite, in the face of a divine inspiration inviting the contrary.

Does such an action, formally and concretely accepted, fall under the category of sin or under that of deeds meritorious and good, though less good than one might reasonably expect? There is the problem as it stands in the manuals of moral theology. It will be our purpose in the following pages to

investigate this problem in the light of Thomistic doctrine as expounded by St. Thomas and his great Commentators. To determine the morality of any action, as far as St. Thomas is concerned, is equivalent to defining its relationship to the eternal law of God, since morality for him is nothing more or less than the conformity or difformity of a moral act or object in reference to the eternal law. Our question, therefore, suggests two avenues of investigation: (1) the positive moral imperfection in relation to the law of right reason; (2) the positive moral imperfection in relation to the law of Christian perfection.

II. THE LAW OF RIGHT REASON

With such an aim as we have proposed it seems necessary to examine the aforesaid positive moral imperfection in its relationship to the law of finality. This principle must be recognized in Thomistic thought as the ultimate testing ground of all morality. If the positive moral imperfection fails to measure up to all of the exigencies of the principle of finality, then it must take its place under the heading of moral evil. This supreme principle or law of all morality, however, can never be grasped in its full significance unless it be examined in the light of the ultimate principles of the speculative order with which it sets up metaphysical continuity.

The first principles to which all of our knowledge is resolved, upon which our conclusions and deductions of the speculative order are based, may be listed in the following order: the principles of identity, of contradiction, and of causality. These principles are first, because they are immediately obvious; they are grasped without any elaboration or process of reasoning. And reasoning, since it is a process of learning new truth from truths already known, needs just such an anchor or starting point as these first principles furnish. Once the terms of which these principles are compounded have been received through sense channels and lifted up to the reach of the spiritual, simple apprehension, the mind of man without any further delay sees

their compatibility. For the mind has an innate aptitude for joining together in the form of a judgment the elements of such principles as these, as soon as those elements have been abstracted from sensible reality. In other words, the mind immediately affirms or denies the identity of subject and predicate in such propositions or judgments. This native ability of the mind St. Thomas calls intellect or the habit of first principles.^{2a} It is certain, but faint, participation of the light of divine intelligence enabling us to grasp and integrate the primary elements of knowledge into a judgment. These judgments or principles themselves are the unshakeable ultimates of knowledge. If they be taken according to their total universality in the line of unparticipated being, they are identical with the divine essence itself considered as the object of the divine intellect and as exemplar of all being other than God. If they be considered in the line of participated being and in the order of abstraction, then they are the first objects of judgment and also the ultimate measures of truth attained by it. Hence they may well be styled the very pillars on which the edifice of science or learning is constructed. For all truths learned by the natural light of reason, all conclusions worthy to be called scientific, must spring from, must be resolvable to, and must find verification in these principles of identity, contradiction, and causality. That is why they are called first principles.

St. Thomas is fond of the analogy which he so frequently draws between the speculative and the moral or practical order.^{2b}

^{2a} *Summa Theologica*, I, q. 79, a. 8: ". . . ratiocinatio humana, secundum viam inquisitionis vel inventionis, procedit a quibusdam simpliciter intellectis, quae sunt prima principia; et rursus, in via iudicii, resolvendo redit ad prima principia ad quae inventa examinat." Also, I-II, q. 57, a. 2: "Verum autem est dupliciter considerabile: uno modo, sicut per se notum: alio modo, sicut per aliud notum. Quod autem est per se notum, se habet ut principium; et percipitur statim ab intellectu. Et ideo habitus perficiens intellectum ad huiusmodi veri considerationem, vocatur intellectus, qui est habitus principiorum."

^{2b} *Ibid.*, I, q. 82, a. 2; I-II, q. 1, aa. 5, 6; q. 94, a. 2: ". . . praecepta legis naturae hoc modo se habent ad rationem practicam, sicut principia prima demonstrationum se habent ad rationem speculativam: utraque enim sunt quaedam principia per se nota."

According to this analogy three primary principles of the moral order must be listed in the following sequence: (1) The principle of finality, which corresponds to that of causality in the speculative order and may be stated in these terms: Act prudently or reasonably for the end; (2) the principle of good, corresponding to the principle of identity mentioned above and expressed in this way: Do good; (3) the principle of evil, paralleling that of contradiction in the speculative order and formulated in this wise: Avoid evil. These principles are first in the moral order, because they spring immediately from, and are founded upon, the notion of good, just as the speculative principles mentioned above stand related to the notion of being.³ In other words, they are first principles because, if considered in their unparticipated universality of practical truth and goodness, they are found to be identical with the eternal law in the divine mind or synonymous with the divine essence as plan of all created activity and motion in the universe.⁴ If accepted in their participated sense, then they are the principles of the natural moral law inscribed upon the rational nature of man and immediately evident to him at the first dawn of reason.⁵ In this latter sense the first principles of the moral order make immediate appeal to an innate aptitude of practical reason which St. Thomas calls *synderesis*, whose special function it is to grasp first moral principles.⁶

The speculative and moral orders, therefore, reduced to these six elemental statements, plainly manifest an indissoluble continuity. The ultimate reason for this lies in the more fundamental fact that the operation of a being follows the conditions

³ *Ibid.*, I-II, q. 94, a. 2: "Nam illud quod primo cadit in apprehensione, est ens, cujus intellectus includitur in omnibus quaecumque quis apprehendit. Et ideo primum principium indemonstrabile est quod non est simul affirmare et negare, quod fundatur supra rationem entis et non entis: et super hoc principio omnia alia fundantur, . . . Sicut autem ens est primum quod cadit in apprehensione simpliciter, ita bonum est primum quod cadit in apprehensione practicae rationis, quae ordinatur ad opus: omne enim agens agit propter finem, qui habet rationem boni. Et ideo primum principium in ratione practica est quod fundatur supra ratione boni, quae est, Bonum est quod omnia appetunt."

⁴ *Ibid.*, q. 19, a. 4; q. 93.

⁵ *Ibid.*, q. 93, a. 3.

⁶ *Ibid.*, I, q. 79, a. 12.

and nature of that being, since nature or substance, at least from the standpoint of creatures, holds a more noble position in the realm of being than does operation, which is rather the prolongation of being accidentally and extrinsically attaching to substance. The principles of identity and contradiction, therefore, which are concerned primarily with substantial, intrinsic being, hold a primacy of honor in the order of speculation over the principle of causality, which judges more directly and immediately the relations of one being to another. In the practical order, however, the principle of finality, for reasons to be suggested presently, must be given first place over the other two practical principles. We see the precise point of contact, therefore, between the speculative and moral orders especially in the correspondence of finality, which is first in the practical order, with the principle of causality, which is last in the speculative order. Thus we find a striking realization of the cherished axiom that the highest element of a lower order meets the lowest element of a higher order on common grounds. Moreover, this unbroken continuity of principles furnishes the basis of that circular motion of the soul's activity which St. Thomas is so fond of repeating after Aristotle. The fact of such a continuity has more significance for our purpose in this, that it gives the moral or practical order a stability which renders it immune to the fanciful assaults of subjectivism and moral skepticism. Such an order of things firmly anchors the dispositions of practical reason in unfailing truth, because it recognizes our functions of reason and understanding to be essentially passive and also takes strict account of their relationship of dependence on reality and, especially, upon the supreme reality.

The primary principles of the moral order, therefore, must be accepted as the measuring rod, or testing grounds, for the ordinations and commands of the practical reason. It is true that practical reason, or intellect and will conjointly bent upon any course of action, is the proximate principle of human activity. The reason institutes and fashions our various courses

of action by ordering and disposing the use of things which fall under the dominion of man,⁷ and by the concurrent, moving influence of the will it brings these ordinations to actual execution and ripened fruition. But the practical reason is not the primordial font of morality; neither is it the ultimate criterion of good and evil in the sphere of morals. It is not the reason of man, whether practical or speculative, that measures and causes reality and truth in things. On the contrary, reality actuates and perfects our reason, which is essentially passive or receptive of truth. Neither does the human will constitute the good merely by desiring it, but the will responds because the good is essentially desirable on its own merits. Hence the dispositions which practical reason makes, the order which it induces into the material of human activity, which it imposes upon the other faculties of man, upon itself indirectly, and upon the use of things in general, must be measured by still higher dispositions and must be grounded upon other more ultimate norms. These we have described already as the first principles of the moral order, which are participations of the eternal law and, consequently, are similitudes of the divine ordinations and dispositions.

The order or rank of priority just conceded to first principles considered among themselves seems to rest on foundations of an impregnable solidity. St. Thomas arrives at this point of view through the following considerations. Moral principles in the order of doing or of action are participations of the eternal law as exemplar of all activity, just as the speculative principles in the order of being and knowledge are participations of the divine essence as exemplar of all being. And neither in the divine essence nor in the eternal law can any really distinguishable order of priority be admitted. Yet in the order of knowledge we may conceive of God as knowing all possible or

⁷ *Ibid.*, I-II, q. 18, a. 5: "In actibus autem humanis bonum et malum dicitur per comparationem ad rationem: quia ut Dionysius dicit, iv cap. *De Div. Nom.*, bonum hominis est secundum rationem esse, malum autem quod est praeter rationem . . ." See also, q. 60, a. 1; II-II, q. 66, a. 2.

producible essences through His own essence viewed, first, as externally imitable or as the ultimate criterion of compatibility and incompatibility, that is, of identity and contradiction, and secondly, as exemplar of the possible order perceivable among these possible essences. This statement is founded upon the Thomistic thesis that possible essences depend remotely upon the divine essence and proximately upon the divine intellect. But in the order of doing and of physical reality, we conceive of the divine good as the keystone of the divine architect's design and as the lodestone of His divine ordinations, because actual, existential being depends ultimately upon the divine will. And there is a confirmation of this point of view in the fact that all things over which the principles of identity and contradiction of the practical order hold sway are good or bad for us, ultimately, because they have been commanded or forbidden by the eternal law *in view of the divine good*, the basis of finality. The above order of principles, therefore, is rooted in our mode of understanding God.

Man in knowing and doing is a feeble image of God, especially in the production of human activity. Hence, just as the speculative intellect first of all conceives of the notion of being, so the practical intellect first attains to the notion of good. Upon this foundation stone of the practical order is immediately built the principle of finality, namely, that the good is that which all things desire. The good, however, is desirable of itself but it could never exert its causality of attraction upon another, that is, upon an appetite, except under the aspect of an end to be attained, since no agent can act unless it acts for an end.⁸ The good, therefore, must be assigned as the immediate and inseparable basis of the notion of end to be sought after and, consequently, as the immediate basis of the principle of finality as applicable to the affairs of men. Next in order of sequence arises the question of means, with which the practical principles of identity and contradiction are directly concerned. First, there is the positive affirmation on the part of practical reason

⁸ *Ibid.*, I-II, q. 94, a. 2.

that goods must be done in order to attain the good, namely, the end. Secondly, its corresponding negative comes forward, urging the avoidance of evil as inimical to the end. Hence, just as all means must be appraised in terms of the end, so also the principles of identity and contradiction of the practical order must find their ultimate significance in reference to the principle of finality. The pertinent implications contained in this order of moral principles will become more manifest as we approach the discussion of relative morality in human activity. For the moment it is sufficient to note that those who insist upon the primacy of the principles, "Do good" and "Avoid evil," over the principle of finality will be forced to answer, when asked why one should do good and avoid evil, that things must be thus regarded and acted upon on account of the end to be attained. Therefore, the order which gives the supremacy to the principle of finality seems to be the only true one.

This point, once established, makes easier the task of showing how the regency of these principles exerts itself upon human activity in a truly human or moral way. The difficulty arises from the fact that these principles, maintaining continuity as they do with the metaphysical principles of being mentioned above, would seem to be, no longer laws of morals, but laws of nature against which no preference is granted, so that every man would be driven by blind instinct to their observance as an animal and hence they tell us how man will behave *de facto* in every case and not what he should do but may refuse or fail to do. Even St. Thomas seems to give this objection a ring of plausibility by stating the principle of finality in the indicative rather than in the imperative mood. He said the good is that which all things (*de facto*) desire; he did not say it is that which they should desire. And, immediately afterwards, in speaking of the principles of good and evil, he employs the imperative "Do good, avoid evil," or, good should be done and evil should be avoided.⁹ St. Thomas really forestalled such an objection in his doctrine on the ultimate end, by bringing

⁹ *Ibid.*

forward, as we must see, the primacy of the principle of finality as an objective, universal norm of true morality.

Two entirely objective aspects must be distinguished in the ultimate end preordained for man's happiness, namely, the formal and the material.¹⁰ The formal aspect answers the question as to why any object is desired as ultimate end; the material aspect identifies the precise object of adherence. Hence the formal aspect or the ultimate end formally considered is the reason (*ratio finis*) for the tendency and the final termination of volition to any concrete object. It is not a mere abstraction, as Cajetan notes,¹¹ but is contracted to the concrete perfections of its material counterpart and summarizes in itself all that is perfective of man's needs and desires. The particular object, itself accepted as the embodiment or realization of the formal reason of volition, constitutes the material ultimate end.

It is clear that the formal ultimate end is the same for all men, since all wish their own perfection and have essentially the same capacity for it. Under this formal aspect, then, the principle of finality is a law of necessity which all, *de facto*, must observe. Individual men, since they understand and reason differently in different circumstances of environment, education, and passion, can and do accept different material objects as the embodiment of their formal ultimate end. This is possible because man's ultimate material end was not naturally predetermined in the concrete to the extent that all further effort and discrimination on the part of free agents in the attainment of their destiny becomes unnecessary. It remains a goal to be sought after and striven for. St. Thomas from an analysis of human faculties and their natural subordination one to another is able to decide that, even materially considered, only one true ultimate end exists for intellectual natures, namely, the Uncreated, Infinite, First Cause attained in a way pro-

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, q. 1, a. 7: "... de ultimo fine possumus loqui dupliciter: uno modo, secundum rationem ultimi finis; alio modo, secundum id in quo finis ultimi ratio invenitur . . ." Also, Cajetan in I-II, q. 1, a. 6.

¹¹ Cajetan, in I-II, q. 1, a. 1; q. 6, a. 2; q. 4, a. 4.

portionate to and dependent upon the state to which man *de facto* belongs.¹² By the light of faith St. Thomas knows that man is of the elevated state and that God, as He is possessed through the light of glory and divine charity, constitutes man's final goal.¹³ This material ultimate end, thus *de facto* constituted, can be and often is repudiated in deference to other materially diverse ultimate ends such as wealth, honor, fame, or power, in which men may erroneously and culpably fix their formal ultimate end. Such a transfer of values is effected only at the price of disillusionment and utter confusion. Hence our *de facto* ultimate end alone should and must under stress of obligation be sought after. It alone is capable of perfecting the elevated nature of man to its fullest capacity. Consequently, it should inform that loftiest of all human operations, namely, that by which man is immediately conjoined to his ultimate end. By the same token, it should also animate and inform the other operations of the entire journey leading to such a happy culmination. The principle of finality, therefore, viewed in this light stands out as the ultimate norm of morality, diffusing its regency over all moral principles and human activity.

St. Thomas stresses the moral complexion of this principle in his treatise on sin. The first problem to be faced by any youth arriving at the age of discretion, he tells us, is that of ordaining his whole life to the due and right ultimate end.¹⁴ St. Thomas returns to this same point of doctrine in his various works no less than eight different times.¹⁵ Hence it is not likely that he considered it to be trivial or of merely academic importance. The end, he says, comes first in the order of intention and it is at the very inception of rational life that the divine

¹² *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 2.

¹³ *Ibid.*, q. 3, aa. 4, 8.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, q. 89, a. 6: "Cum vero usum rationis habere inceperit non omnino excusatur a culpa venialis et mortalis peccati. Sed primum quod tunc homini cogitandum occurrit, est deliberare de seipso. Et si quidem seipsum ordinaverit ad debitum finem, per gratiam consequetur remissionem originalis peccati."

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, q. 89, a. 6; *Q. D. de Veritate*, q. 24, a. 12, ad 2; q. 28, a. 3, ad 4; *Q. D. de Malo*, q. 5, a. 2, ad 8; q. 8, a. 10, ad 8; *II Sent.*, d. 28, q. 1, a. 3, ad 5; d. 42, q. 1, a. 5, ad 7; *IV Sent.*, d. 45, q. 1, a. 3, ad 6.

precept about the end, that is, the precept enjoining a conversion to God as ultimate end, begins to bind under pain of mortal sin.¹⁶ In this reference St. Thomas is speaking of man's true, material, ultimate end, namely, God as the perfect embodiment of man's formal ultimate end objectively considered. It is clear that he wishes to give the principle of finality a primacy, a truly moral character, and a binding force which should be felt throughout the length and breadth of man's whole moral life.

On the strength of what has been established up to this point, morality in its formal sense should be defined as an intrinsic modification, order, or relationship induced into human activity by the practical reason judging and disposing in conformity or difformity with the ultimate and immutable principles of the eternal law. But other problems also have been raised in the course of argumentation. First, the interaction or mutual relation of the three primary principles of morality needs further clarification. Secondly, the precise manner in which their regency is exercised proximately upon human action in the concrete remains as yet vague and illusory. These problems seem to demand attention before any satisfactory examination of moral imperfections in the light of first moral principles can be attempted. Since, however, the solution to the second difficulty contains a sufficient answer to the first, our task is somewhat simplified. But even so it can be compassed only by first determining the subject of morality as just defined.

By elimination, the proximate subject of man's morals narrows down to human liberty, namely, that function of intellect and will operating conjointly known as free choice or free judgment, since liberty does not claim to be a faculty distinct from intellect and will.¹⁷ Morality then is subjected immediately in

¹⁶ *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 89, a. 6, ad 3: "Primum enim quod occurrit homini discretionem habenti est quod de seipso cogitet, ad quem alia ordinet sicut ad finem; finis enim est prior in intentione. Et ideo est tempus pro quo obligatur ex Dei praecepto affirmativo, quo Dominus dicit: Convertimini ad me, et ego convertar ad vos. . . ."

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, q. 1, a. 1: "Est autem homo dominus suorum actuum per rationem et

those actions proper to man, namely, free actions. It needs such a support or subject of inherence, because as we have seen it is essentially an order or relationship ingrafted upon human behavior. In which of the two faculties that concur in the function of liberty is morality found formally? St. Thomas has answered that its most formal aspect must be accredited to the reason, to which it properly belongs to design the order and supply the guidance or direction so manifest in human affairs. Materially or substantially, however, it is found in the will, which contributes efficient impetus and motional execution to the plan devised by reason.¹⁸ By derivation or participation, morality is found also in any other efficient principles or faculties of man, or even in external things used by him upon which reason and will have impressed the vestiges of their order and motion by exercising their dominion. Morality is found also, and especially, in the moral objects which specify and morally determine human action, because reason and will cannot feed upon themselves since they are radically passive. Nevertheless, we must insist that morality according to its formal aspect as a distinctive reality resides essentially in reason and will or operational liberty.

This diversity of subjects must be accounted for in virtue of diverse modes of inherence or existence on the part of morality. St. Thomas brings the doctrine of analogy to bear on the problem. Morality exists in these different subjects analogically.¹⁹ Its application may be illustrated by an example. Health exists formally in animals or living things and nowhere

voluntatem: unde et liberum arbitrium esse dicitur facultas voluntatis et rationis." Also, q. 13, a. 6.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, q. 13, a. 1; q. 14, a. 1, ad 1; q. 20, a. 1.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, q. 20, a. 3, ad 3: ". . . quando aliquid ex uno derivatur in alterum sicut ex causa agente univoca, tunc aliud est quod est in utroque: sicut cum calidum calefacit, alius numero est calor calefacientis et calor calefacti, licet idem specie. Sed quando aliquid derivatur ab uno in alterum secundum analogiam vel proportionem, tunc est tantum unum numero: sicut a sano quod est in corpore animalis, derivatur sanum ad medicinam et urinam: nec alia sanitas est medicinae et urinae, quam sanitas animalis, quam medicina facit et urina significat. Et hoc modo a bonitate voluntatis derivatur bonitas actus exterioris, et e converso. . . ."

else; it exists significantly in the bark of trees and in the fur or coat of animals, inasmuch as these externals serve as a dependable criterion of the health intrinsically inherent to the inner being. Health is also found causally in medicine or food, inasmuch as these possess certain ingredients which are conducive to the regaining of lost health or conservative of health now enjoyed by living creatures. This sort of analogy is known as analogy of attribution; the notable feature about it is that the analogue, form, or reality involved in analogy of this type does not become multiple by reason of its existence in many subjects. One and the same form or quality, let us say, health, exists in medicine, in the animal healed by it, and in the sheen of his fur caused by health. So it is with the various subjects of morality; it exists formally in liberty or the conjoint operation of intellect and will, significantly and by derivation in the external operations imperated and determined by liberty, and causally in moral objects. A human action, then, numerically one and the same as to its moral character, can exist in these different subjects of inherence without multiplication of its form or moral entity. It can exist in these multiple subjects without multiplication of itself on account of the aforesaid diversity in modes of existence.

The parallel, however, between health and morality with respect to their different subjects begins to limp if pushed beyond a certain point. This is especially noticeable in the case of moral object when compared to its corresponding analogate, namely, medicine. Medicine, for example, effects health in the animal according to the line of efficient causality, whereas the type of causality exerted proximately by moral object upon liberty (reason and will) is principally that of extrinsic formal causality. Perhaps the emphasis should be equally placed upon efficient and formal causality where it is a question of the transmission of morality from liberty (reason and will) to other faculties and external operations. For external operations, considered from this angle, are effects as well as terms of operative liberty. Liberty, since it is essentially undetermined as a mere

potency not yet in act, must become moral or the essential subject of formal morality in the first instance by its contact with external reality where the elements of formal morality must be sought. Hence this contact or communication set up between moral object on the one hand and individual liberty (reason and will) on the other is effected through the channel of extrinsic formal causality. Such an exception to perfect correspondence, however, far from destroying, rather heightens the essential utility of the analogy as drawn by St. Thomas, since it is at the juncture between moral object as extrinsic formal cause and individual reason that we shall observe the regency of first moral principles converging and being transmitted to concrete human activity.

Certain proximate goals or objects of human activity are said to be moral, that is, good or bad in themselves objectively and independently of this or that private individual's judgment. To pay one's debts according to legitimate contract, to defend one's life or country, to respect or obey parents, to give alms, are good deeds; blasphemy, murder, theft, fornication, are evil for everybody, everywhere, at all times. Such actions or moral objects, to a certain extent still abstract, cannot be the subject of morality in its most formal sense, but they furnish the immediate material for concrete morality in its formal sense. They stand out as proximate goals of choice, because it is impossible to determine or contract them further as to their moral species but only as to numerical multiplication in the individual. They contain morality of themselves, materially, on account of their essential conformity or diffornity with the eternal law. From the viewpoint of the divine legislator, they are objectively good or bad only as practical ordinations deriving from, that is, prescribed or forbidden by, the eternal law which is the divine essence as directive and ordinative of all created motion to the ultimate end.²⁰ Man himself is so con-

²⁰ *Ibid.*, q. 71, a. 6, ad 4: ". . . cum dicitur quod non omne peccatum ideo est malum quia est prohibitum, intelligitur de prohibitione facta per ius positivum. Si autem referatur ad ius naturale, quod continetur primo quidem in lege aeterna,

stituted by the Creator that his ultimate perfection or utter confusion depends upon the practical attitude he takes towards these ordinations deriving from the eternal law. From man's viewpoint, however, these same ordinations in themselves are good or bad simply because he perceives them to involve an essential conformity or repugnance to his nature, his perfection, his true ultimate end, and consequently to be capable of determining according to extrinsic formal causality his concrete activity in the right or wrong direction.

Thus practical reason objectively right, namely, that of the prudent and wise man, perceives but does not constitute the essential connections between these specifically irreducible ordinations and their higher principles. It can—even must to be thoroughly reasoned and content—reconstruct the edifice from turret to foundation by reducing the proximate goals or ends of moral activity through intermediary principles back to ultimates.²¹ Right reason easily resolves veracity and theft, for example, to the recognized fact of our dependence upon society which is morally expressed in the golden rule, "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you." From this level to the higher principles of identity and contradiction, "Do good," "Avoid evil," is no great distance. A similar connection obtains between first principles and all other material which rightfully claims to be morally good or evil in itself. Fornication or deeds of bravery, for example, can be grounded upon the principle, "Passions must be regulated," which of course expresses morally the fact of reason's right over all other principalities in man's nature. And this principle again is only one step removed from the principles, "Do good," and "Avoid evil." The direct regency, therefore, of the principles of identity and contradiction ("Do good," and "Avoid evil") over proximate ends or objects of human activity is established.

secundario vero in naturali iudicatorio rationis humanae, tunc omne peccatum est malum quia prohibitum: ex hoc enim ipso quod est inordinatum, iuri naturali repugnat."

²¹ St. Thomas explains the process of the moral syllogism, *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 77, a. 2, and ad 4; *Q. D. de Malo*, q. 6, a. unic.; *Q. D. de Veritate*, q. 22, a. 6.

These principles, namely "Do good," and "Avoid evil," must in their turn be connected with the first of all moral principles, that of finality, "Act for the true ultimate end." The true ultimate end of man, both formally and materially considered, is God. But God cannot be operated upon, constructed, or used by human activity, for He is the ultimate unchangeable good. Hence we cannot state as a moral principle, "Do or perform the ultimate good," and then reason that the principle of identity after all is the supreme principle of morality. The reason for this lies in the fact that the ultimate good which man can do will always remain something subjected in him (*a finis cui*) and will have about it the character of a means. We might say, "Avoid the ultimate evil," namely, eternal damnation, which of course is only relatively ultimate since there is no absolute ultimate in evils. But even this can be avoided only by doing certain goods which stand related to *The Good* as means to an end. Hence we are thus forced back to the fact that the principle of finality is supreme in morals and that it exerts its regency over all other principles, ordinations, or goods, because they are all on account of this principle and the sole utility or value of doing good and avoiding evil springs from their relationship to the ultimate end.

This last step in our argumentation suggests the necessity of making one more distinction. There is a twofold morality in human acts, an absolute moral entity and a relative moral entity.²² The absolute moral entity includes directly the nature, substance, or species of the act derived from its proximate end or goal, and indirectly any accidental morality within the same species contributed by the circumstances. In other words, the type of moral objects which we were discussing above confers absolute moral entity upon concrete human activity. Accidental circumstances only modify within the same species this absolute

²² *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 6, a. 6, ad 2: ". . . Voluntarium autem dicitur aliquid non solum propter seipsum, quasi absolute, sed etiam propter aliud, quasi relative. Et ideo nihil prohibet aliquid quod non esset voluntarium alteri comparatum, fieri voluntarium per comparationem ad aliud." Cf. *ibid.*, q. 8, a. 3; q. 12, aa. 3, 4.

moral entity already essentially constituted. It is said to be absolute on account of its objective stability, constancy, or capacity for rectifying or vilifying any reasoned act of will accepting it. This absolute moral entity can be directly resolved, as we have seen, to the principles of identity and contradiction ("Do good"—"Avoid evil") by right reason on the part of each individual. In fact this process must take place either explicitly or implicitly if private reason is thoroughly right and human actions are thoroughly reasoned. Indirectly the absolute moral entity of an action is also resolvable to the principle of finality inasmuch as absolute moral entity, that is, objective good and evil in actions, viewed from the angle of the legislator, was so constituted in virtue of the principle of finality. But a direct resolution on the part of private reason, as far as the absolute moral entity is concerned, may rest secure in the principles of identity and contradiction. These principles are the ultimate criterion or testing ground for the absolute moral entity of a human act. Accepted thus in the abstract, it will either concur in or clash with the exigencies of these two principles directly without any need of further resolution to the principle of finality.

It may be well to note in this regard that two absolutely good actions, one of which surpasses the other objectively as to moral worth, are both in conformity with the principle of identity, since both are good. Thus, considered from their abstract and objective aspect alone, both or either may be performed, but morally indifferent actions as such have no reference to or connection with the principles of identity and contradiction. Hence, unless some accidental circumstance endows them with absolute moral entity, such actions will show up negative in the light of the aforesaid principles. The reason for these statements rests upon the fact that the principles or precepts of good and evil exercise their regency immediately over means to the end, and this only with regard to an abstractable portion of the human action, namely, its absolute moral entity. They do not of themselves directly account for the

whole moral entity of a human action any more than the principles of being (identity and contradiction) in the speculative order could immediately and directly pass adequate judgment upon the hypothesis of perpetual motion. A complete judgment in both cases will involve the principle of causality, namely, that of efficient causality in the case of perpetual motion, and that of final causality in the case of human actions if they be considered according to concrete existential reality.

This point brings us back to the previous statement about a twofold morality in human activity. An act placed in concrete reality already presupposes the absolute moral entity to have been determined by direct reference to the principles of identity and contradiction, and in addition to this it requires a relative moral entity determined by direct reference to the principle of finality. Once the objective goodness or malice of an action has been decided, it still remains to decide upon its utility for the individual here and now in these concrete circumstances. This utility can be determined only in view of the principle of finality. The condition of concreteness realized in every formally human action of its very nature demands such a complement to absolute or specific entity, because no agent can act or begin to act in true human fashion without some sort of confrontation to an ultimate end.

The end (*finis operantis*) can be considered from three different points of view. First, it may be drawn into the general stream of human activity as an accidental, extrinsic circumstance accessory to the substance of the act. In this sense it does not confer the relative moral entity with which we are now concerned, but merely modifies the absolute moral entity.²³ Secondly, the end is also the specifying object of the interior act (*velle*) of will.²⁴ Considered from this aspect, the end regards the interior act of volition just as any of the actions,

²³ *Ibid.*, q. 7, aa. 3, 4.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, q. 1, a. 1: "... Objectum autem voluntatis est finis et bonum." See also art. 3; q. 18, a. 6: "... Finis autem proprie est objectum interioris actus voluntarii. . . ."

described above as objectively moral, stand related to the individual's choice. Thus it does not confer a relative morality; neither does it characterize the action of will in a merely accidental way, but rather it determines the interior act of will substantially by contributing the absolute moral entity and thus coinciding with the function of objectively moral objects in respect to choice. Thirdly, the end may be considered as coordinating the material of a certain segregated portion of an individual's human activity or as regulating the formally human activity of one's entire life. The end considered from this point of view confers a relative moral entity which unifies moral life or certain portions of it into a relative whole. It will be necessary to dwell upon this aspect of end since it touches immediately the juncture between concrete and abstract morality and thus marks the converging point of regency exercised by the ultimate principles of morality.

A careful scrutiny of the psychological texture of a human act will help to clarify this third acceptance of the end. Psychologically, the genesis of human activity has its inception in the practical intellect's proposal or presentation of some object under the aspect of good. The will, awakened from its state of inactivity by the presence of a known good, begins to yield passively to the overtures of the good confronting it, in fact, begins to be impregnated with a similitude or complacency of the good proposed. When the saturation point of this process has been reached, the will elicits a simple, interior act of volition. But at this stage the will as yet has made only a conditional or inefficacious commitment of itself. The process itself is described by the Thomists as the specification of the faculty by its object, or simply the exercise of extrinsic formal causality on the part of the good intellectually presented. Should the will be so won over by the attraction that it can efficaciously urge the intellect to explore and pronounce favorably upon the possibilities of attaining this good as an end, then a new phase of volition begins. Up to this point the role played by the good coincides with the second aspect of end mentioned

above as determining the interior act of will as to specific nature or absolute morality. But now in the presence of a good proposed as possible of attainment, a new act of will arises, namely, desire or intention. This second act of will completely accepts and embraces the good precisely as end, not merely as to its formal aspect but also as to its material aspect. For the two objective aspects of end have completely coalesced when this point is reached. Hence it is here that concrete formal morality begins; it is also here that the end begins its regulative function from which the relative morality of human action has its origin.

The intention, it will be observed, does not, as the first volition, pause before the proposed good absorbed merely in a simple reaction to its charm. The intention implies an outward trend, a tendency or real psychological motion radiating from the will to the end complexly conceived now as a term possible of attainment through means.²⁵ This complexity on the part of the end proposed as possible involves a potential plurality of factors to be grouped in order, according to relative importance, under the heading of means. The actual grouping or ordering of means, the acceptance of these as apt, the ultimate discernment and preference of this or that means in view of the end, are all the work of deliberation. Deliberation comprises four distinct acts, namely, reason's consultation provoking will's consent and reason's ultimate practical judgment determining will's choice or election in the line of extrinsic formal causality, but being determined itself as to its definitiveness by the act of choice which it provoked. Thus the intentional and elective stages in the genesis of a human act are accomplished. There remains only the order of execution comprising reason's *imperium*, will's active use, the passive use of this or that faculty, and finally fruition on the part of the will.²⁶ But the most important single phase of this entire process centers about the intention, for the intention energizes physically this entire pattern of psychological activity in its outward trend towards a

²⁵ *Ibid.*, q. 12, aa. 1, 2.

²⁶ St. Thomas discusses the various psychological acts prerequisite to a human act in *Summa Theol.*, I-II, qq. 8-17.

real possession of the end as term. The tendency once inaugurated may gain momentum or grow sluggish as it flows by relay through the nicely balanced interchange of intellectual and volitional operation; it may even be short-circuited before a choice or execution of means is effected, but whatever its fate may be will depend largely upon the energy of the original intention.

From the standpoint of morality, however, the notion of order which enters the above-mentioned chain of activity at the point of intention is most significant. St. Thomas thinks, as we saw above,²⁷ that moral life is begun in the first instance by an intention of or ordering of life to the ultimate end. If this first intention be good, that is, centered upon the true ultimate end, then the moral activity of a whole lifetime has been properly orientated by the same act. Moreover, the supreme principle or precept of the moral order enjoining us to act for the end, has been fulfilled and at the same time brought in contact with concrete human activity. For actual determination or specification of will in such a manner implies actual rectitude of the will and also virtual or actual subordination and rectification of all other faculties, actions, and objects which may be drawn into the stream of human activity by the influence of the intention. St. Thomas expresses this idea more briefly by insisting that rectitude of will and moral life consists in *due* order to the ultimate end and that the relation between means and end is the same as that between matter and form.²⁸ Viewing the problem from a still more objective aspect, he said that the ultimate end bears the same relation to desirable goods in the line of extrinsic formal causality as first mover to secondary movers in the line of efficient causality.²⁹ The end thus accepted

²⁷ See footnotes, 14, 16.

²⁸ *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 4, a. 4: "... rectitudo voluntatis est per debitum ordinem ad finem ultimum. Finis autem comparatur ad id quod ordinatur ad finem, sicut forma ad materiam. Unde sicut materia non potest consequi formam, nisi sit debito modo disposita ad ipsam, ita nihil consequitur finem, nisi sit debito modo ordinatum ad ipsum."

²⁹ *Ibid.*, q. 1, a. 6: "... ultimus finis hoc modo se habet in movendo appetitum, sicut se habet in aliis motionibus primum movens. Manifestum est autem quod

as form unifying our moral life confers upon human activity a relative moral entity over and above the absolute entity derived from the proximate object.

The universal and indispensable regency of the principle of finality thus becomes manifest. We are bound by this principle to ordain every human action to the ultimate end either actually or, at the very least, virtually. It is true that an habitual determination of will by the virtue of charity insures against every complete disavowal of the principle of finality, yet it also permits many slight interruptions in the principle's regency through venial sin. For venial sin, though virtually ordained to the formal ultimate end, is neither actually nor virtually, but only habitually, ordained to the material ultimate end on which the binding force of finality ultimately rests. Virtual ordination or intention requires that consideration and choice fall upon the means as such, that is, an object including its reference or proportion to the ultimate end which has been desired by a previous actual intention still virtually exerting its influence.³⁰ Some authors make concessions not to be found in St. Thomas when they imply that the mere choice of a proximate object morally good in itself is implicitly, and consequently sufficiently, ordained to the ultimate end apart from every consideration of its proportion to that end. Such a choice from the supernatural standpoint would be worthless according to the more conservative view of St. Thomas, because it would escape the positive regency of charity or of finality elevated to the order of grace. Even in the natural order it would be morally good only in the material sort of way, since it would lack the relative moral entity which is due to every human action and by

causae secundae moventes non movent nisi secundum quod moventur a primo movente. Unde secunda appetibilia non movent appetitum nisi in ordine ad primum appetibile, quod est ultimus finis."

³⁰ *Ibid.*, "Quod quidem si non appetitur ut bonum perfectum, quod est ultimus finis, necesse est ut appetatur ut tendens in bonum perfectum." Also ad 3: ". . . non oportet ut semper aliquis cogitet de ultimo fine, quandocumque aliquid appetit vel operatur: sed virtus primae intentionis, quæ est respectu ultimi finis, manet in quolibet appetitu cujuscumque rei, etiam si de ultimo fine actu non cogitetur."

which alone it can be rendered truly or formally moral in the concrete.³¹ Hence the regency of first moral principles, especially that of the supreme principle, must be exerted either actually or virtually upon all particular human actions before they can claim to be completely moral or human.

At this point the problem needs restatement. Our preliminary search for the ultimate basis of moral obligation raised the question of regency among first moral principles and of their influence upon concrete human actions. The first part of this difficulty, and to some extent the second, was answered in the discussion on various subjects of morality and especially on proximate objects or actions in themselves good or evil from which, as from irreducible conclusions, the thread of moral obligation was traced back in unbroken continuity to its sources. In the course of this procedure we discovered that the positive moral imperfection cannot be tested adequately by the moral principles of identity and contradiction, because their regency extends over material more or less abstract and consequently two goods of objectively different moral value are both conformable to the principle of good as long as they remain in the state of abstraction.

Hence, even the choice of an inferior good or the omission of a counsel might easily square up with these principles, since, accepted alone, they measure only the absolute or specific moral entity of action in the abstract. The counsels and their direct opposites, virginity, for example, and the married state, are both good choices when viewed absolutely and apart from the principle of finality. But the principle of finality was proven to be the highest of all moral principles. It presupposes conformity with the other two principles and demands still more. For looking down from the high altitudes of this principle we were impressed with the fact that a human act is not entirely good for the individual unless it has been actually or virtually resolved to the principle of finality and found to be useful in the attainment of the end from which it derives its relative

³¹ *Ibid.*, q. 8, a. 3; q. 12, a. 4.

moral entity. The absolute entity and relative entity of a human action concretely accepted bear the same relation to each other as matter and form.³² The relative moral entity, being the ultimate determination or last individuating form of concrete action, thus unifies morality existing in a multiple subject. An object, therefore, or action, proven to be endowed with these two elements, which alone can guarantee its total conformity with the ultimate principles of morality, and thus proposed by the ultimate practical judgment, must infallibly render the subsequent choice or election morally good. If the action should lack either of these elements, then it must infallibly³³ transmit through the channel of extrinsic formal causality its deficiency or corruption³⁴ to any deliberated election embracing it. The regency of the principle of finality viewed from its descending influence seems to demand all of that.

Whether or not, in the opinion of St. Thomas, the positive moral imperfection definitely interrupts the actual and virtual regency of the principle of finality and, consequently, whether it lacks the relative moral entity due to every concrete human act, is the precise turn which our problem now takes. Does the positive moral imperfection, that is, the deliberate preference of the inferior of two goods accepted concretely, meet all of the exigencies of the law of finality? Are we bound in virtue of this law to choose what is concretely and prudently regarded to be the better good? A solution to this phase of the problem will answer the query, not yet completely satisfied, as to the regency of finality over concrete actions, since it will call for a careful scrutiny of the juncture between proximate moral object and free choice, thus bridging over the last span between objective and subjective morality. The only point of approach

³² *Q. D. de Ver.*, q. 23, a. 8: "Cum autem bonum ex fine dependeat, voluntas bona dicitur secundum ordinem ad rationem volendi, quae est finis. Comparatio vero voluntatis ad volitum absolute non facit actum voluntatis esse bonum, cum ipsum volitum se habeat quasi materialiter ad rationem volendi, quae est finis rectus. . . ." See also, *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 19, a. 4.

³³ Infallibly, we say, and not necessarily, because the will freely commits itself to the content of a judgment which it has rendered ultimate by election.

³⁴ Cf. *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 18, a. 1.

left untested seems to be on the side of subjective morality, a sort of eye-witness position to the immediate and essential subject of concrete morality, namely, free judgment. There we can observe the hand-to-hand co-operation of ultimate practical judgment and election in the fabrication of a concrete human act. Such an approach, calculated as it is in terms of the twelve psychological acts mentioned above as prerequisite to any completely moral act, immediately leads to an inquiry about the possibility of choosing any concrete good other than the better good.

Psychologically speaking, the better good is the only alternative of any group of less acceptable alternatives which can possibly win over the preference or election of the will. If the practical reason, after diligent consultation upon the relative merits of two or more goods, discovers that one is noticeably better for the individual's purpose here and now, all things being considered, or that one undoubtedly appears to be more useful for the end in view, then the will cannot decline this better proposal out of deference to lesser goods as long as the same particular judgment stands approving and dictating this better good. Certainly, the will can on account of freedom or other predispositions indirectly override the judgment of reason by sending it off in quest of another good only apparently better, because it is actual election after all that makes reason's judgment ultimate and definitive. But it cannot do this while the former judgment stands, and the fact remains that it will always choose what seems here and now to be the better good. St. Thomas commits himself irrevocably to this position when he subscribes to the statement that every election turns upon that which in some way seems to be the better good.³⁵ He argues against freedom in the election by proposing the well-

³⁵ *Ibid.*, q. 13, a. 6, arg. 3: "Sed omnis electio est de omni eo quod videtur aliquo modo melius" is a minor which St. Thomas neither denies nor distinguishes, but concedes. See also, *ibid.*, q. 12, a. 3, c: "... homo unum alteri praelegit, quia melius est altero. . . ." *Q. D. de Ver.*, q. 22, a. 15: "... eligere est actus voluntatis, secundum quod ratio proponit ei bonum (non ut utile simpliciter) sed ut utilius ad finem."

known impasse in which the will should find itself when situated between two goods equally attractive. The deadlock is broken, he tells us, by reason's discovery or "invention" of some aspect of preeminence in one or the other alternative.³⁶ Thus all roads are blocked to any other answer for this problem. The ultimate reason for this lies in the fact that the better good, concretely accepted, either real or apparent, furnishes the only adequate motive for preference. St. Thomas commenting on the *Ethics* declares that, since a thing is chosen solely for its aspect of good, whatever is preferable among various alternatives must possess that which renders it really or apparently the greater good.³⁷ His disciples stand united on this same point, insisting that the better good is the ultimate motive for preference.³⁸

This psychological fact about the motive for choice, so earnestly put forward in Thomistic thought, has a still deeper significance when correlated to its broader background in metaphysics. All creatures of nature, St. Thomas assures us, invariably act for the greater good if not otherwise impeded.³⁹ But such a mode of action must not be restricted to the creatures of the material or spiritual universe. God and nature and every agent whatsoever does that which in the long view of things is the better good, we are told.⁴⁰ St. Thomas finds the basis for

³⁶ *Ibid.*, q. 13, a. 6, ad 3: ". . . nihil prohibet, si aliqua duo aequalia proponantur secundum unam considerationem, quin circa alterum consideretur aliqua conditio per quam emineat, et magis flectatur voluntas in ipsum quam in aliud."

³⁷ *In V Ethic.*, lect. 5: "Unumquodque eligitur sub ratione boni. Et ideo illud quod magis eligitur habet rationem majoris boni."

³⁸ Conradus in I-II, q. 13, a. 6: ". . . stante apprehensione bonitatis, tunc majus praeeligitur, sed non necessitate absoluta, sed solum conditionata. . ."

Medina in I-II, q. 13, a. 6: ". . . ideo in moralibus regula est quod electio est de meliori bono . . ."

Cf. Cajetan, John of St Thomas, and Billuart on this same article.

³⁹ *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 103, a. 1: ". . . videmus in rebus naturalibus provenire quod melius est, aut semper, aut in pluribus . . ."; cf. also, *Q. D. de Pot.*, q. 3, a. 6, ad 26; *Quodlib.*, VIII, q. 1, a. 2; *III Contra Gentiles*, 64.

⁴⁰ *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 48, a. 2, ad 3: "Deus et natura et quodcumque agens facit quod melius est in toto." Also *I Eth.*, lect. 14: ". . . unumquodque agens optime disponat id quod agit, quanto melius potest. Et hoc praecipue videtur de Deo qui est totius naturae causa."

this world view in a more general principle. No one, he tells us, endowed with the insight of wisdom should consent to sustain a loss in any enterprise without assurances of compensation from an equal or better good. Hence the election, continues St. Thomas, of the lesser good, that is, of something involving a loss, can be justified only in view of some equal or greater gain accruing to or conjoined with the aforesaid loss.⁴¹ This of course amounts to a choice of the better good, all things being considered. According to St. Thomas then, God made the best possible selection for His purposes in creating this our universe.⁴² He also implanted in the nature of irresponsible creatures an instinctive tendency which, though occasionally impeded by other causes driven by the same urge, on the whole seeks and accomplishes the better good. The psychological endowments of man including also his liberty must fit one way or another into this metaphysical framework.

Hence the problem arises again, as it did with regard to the ultimate end, as to the possibility of transferring such a rigorous law of metaphysics and psychology over to the plane of morals where liberty must receive special consideration. As to the fact of such an application or transition St. Thomas never hesitates. The general principle just referred to above was applied to matters entirely moral. On the basis of this principle St.

⁴¹ *IV Sent.*, d. 31, q. 1, a. 1 (*Summa Theol.*, Supplement, q. 49, a. 1): "Nullus sapiens debet jacturam aliquam sustinere nisi pro aliqua recompensatione alicujus (aequalis vel melioris boni; unde electio alicujus) quod aliquam jacturam habet annexam, indiget alicujus boni adjunctione, per cuius recompensationem ordinetur et honestetur."

⁴² *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 48, a. 2, ad 3. In connection with this reference, Passerini (cf. in II-II, q. 184, a. 3) proposed against his own thesis the following objection which his opponents turned against him: God is free to create or not create, free to create a better world than the present. Therefore He is not bound to the better good and consequently does not hold us to the better good.

In response to this objection Passerini notes first, that God's perfection does not depend upon creatures, therefore He would have been just as perfect with or without a better world abstractly considered. The perfection of creatures, however, depends upon the quality of their actions and consequently upon the goods which they choose. Secondly, although God is free to create or not create, yet He is bound to create the best world for His purposes, once it is granted that He has decreed to create.

Thomas requires the three traditional goods attained by a holy marriage as a recompense for the loss of reason and other goods suffered in a complete indulgence of the married state.⁴³ There is not the least doubt that its application is made on the plane of morals. Such terms as *debet*, *ordinetur*, and *honestetur* occurring in the text of St. Thomas have a moral cast and connotation too plain to be casually ignored. Moreover, St. Thomas does not leave his thought to the whims of interpretation. It stands out clear and unmistakable where he makes the flat statement that, since things of nature are ordered according to divine arrangement which human reason *ought* to *imitate*, whatever is done by human reason in a style contrary to the arrangement commonly observed in natural things is vicious and sinful.⁴⁴ But we have heard St. Thomas declaring already that the divine and natural way of election is to choose the better good. Therefore the fact that we are at least morally constrained to choose the concrete better good seems to be established in the doctrine of St. Thomas.

On account of the importance of this fact, however, we cite one other case which is complementary and corroborative of the preceding. St. Thomas raises an objection against frequent communion based upon the great reverence and awe with which we should approach this sacrament. This objection is attacked by noting first of all that reverence for the Eucharist arises from a concurrence of fear and love. The desire of receiving it springs

⁴³ *IV Sent.*, d. 31, q. 1, a. 1: ". . . et haec sunt bona quae matrimonium excusant, et honestum reddunt." See also, q. 2, a. 2, ad 2: "Quando natura tantum movet ad actum matrimonii, non excusatur a peccato omnino, nisi in quantum motus naturae ordinatur actu vel habitu ulterius ad prolem secundum quod est bonum sacramenti. Nec tamen sequitur quod motus naturae sit malus sed quod sit imperfectus, nisi ad aliquod bonum matrimonii ulterius ordinetur." See also *IV Sent.*, d. 26, q. 1, a. 1 (*Summa Theol.*, Suppl., q. 41, a. 1): "Alio modo dicitur naturale ad quod natura inclinatur, sed mediante libro arbitrio completur; sicut actus virtutum, vel virtutes dicuntur naturales: et hoc modo matrimonium est naturale; quia naturalis ratio ad ipsum inclinatur. . . ."

⁴⁴ *Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 130, a. 1: "Cum ea quae sunt secundum naturam sint ordinata ratione divina, quam humana ratio debet imitari, quidquid secundum rationem humanam fit, quod est contra ordinem communiter in naturalibus rebus inventum, est vitiosum et peccatum."

from love, whilst humility is born of fear. Then, practically, he points the way out of this impasse by advising that each person should do what in the sincerity of his faith seems best for him. But St. Thomas drops the remark that love is preferred to fear⁴⁵ and this thought is more fully developed in another approach to the same problem.⁴⁶ Since love is preferred to fear, he tells us, it seems more commendable, objectively speaking, to receive the Eucharist more frequently; but since a thing *more preferable in itself* may be *less so for this or that individual* in the concrete, each individual *ought* to consider the advantages and disadvantages of frequent communion for himself personally. If he finds that frequent communion fans the flame of charity for Christ to more intense degrees of fervor or that it stands as a mighty bulwark against numerous temptations to which all are subjected, then he *ought* to receive the Eucharist frequently or even daily. If on the other hand a loss of fervor and reverence is the noticeable result, then he must be advised to receive rarely.⁴⁷ St. Thomas teaches in another passage⁴⁸ that the reception of Holy Communion at least *in voto* is necessary to salvation by a necessity of means; actual reception

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, III, q. 80, a. 10, ad 3: “. . . huic sacramento in quo Christus continetur, maxima reverentia debetur. Ad reverentiam autem pertinet quod aliquis hoc sacramento absteineat: unde laudatur Centurio, qui dixit (*Matt.*, viii, 8), Domine, non sum dignus ut intres sub tectum meum. . . . Ergo non est laudabile quod homo quotidie hoc sacramentum suscipiat.” In answer to this: “. . . unusquisque faciat quod secundum fidem suam pie credidit esse faciendum. . . . Amor tamen et spes ad quae semper Scriptura nos provocat, praeferuntur timori, unde et, cum Petrus dixisset, ‘Exi a me, Domine, quia peccator homo ego sum,’ respondit Jesus: ‘Nolite timere.’”

⁴⁶ *In Epist. I ad Cor.*, xi, 27-34, lect. 8.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*: “. . . Legitur etiam eodem (*Luc.* xix, 7), quod Centurio dixit Christo: ‘Non sum dignus . . .’ In quo commendatur honor et reverentia ejus ad Christum. Quia tamen amor praeferunt timori, per se loquendo, commendatus esse videtur quod aliquis frequentius sumat, quam quod rarius. Quia tamen quod est in se eligibilis, potest esse minus eligibile quantum ad hunc vel illum: considerare quilibet in seipso debet, quam effectum in se habeat frequens susceptio hujus sacramenti. Nam si aliquis sentiat se perficere in fervore dilectionis ad Christum et in fortitudine resistendi peccatis, quae plurimum consequuntur homines, debet frequentius sumere. Si vero ex frequenti sumptione sentiat aliquis in se minus reverentiam hujus sacramenti, monendus, est ut rarius sumat. . . .”

⁴⁸ *Summa Theol.*, III, q. 73, a. 3.

outside of those times prescribed by the church is not necessary to salvation. He does not determine here the precise gravity of the obligation under which the individual would be bound to receive communion frequently in case it should become reasonably certain that such a practice is the better good for him. But the fact remains that he would be bound to do so, and the proximate basis of the obligation would be the better good concretely considered as such for himself personally. There is no question here of a mere lack of fervor excusing him from the obligation or from sin. On the contrary, if one thinks that his fervor and devotion will be increased by a frequent reception that is precisely when he is *bound* and *ought* to receive more frequently.

Thus the correspondence of this teaching with that exposed above in connection with the state of marriage becomes apparent. There we saw that a person is permitted to choose the lesser good only when some equal or greater compensation is assured, that is, when the lesser good absolutely speaking becomes here and now by reason of its relative moral entity the better good for the individual.⁴⁹ Here with regard to frequent communion, St. Thomas declares that objectively considered it is the better good and that we are obliged to it whenever it is prudently found to be the better good also in the concrete order. Whereas the lesser good objectively considered, that is, the state of marriage, is looked upon as an indulgence needing some excuse or compensation and is excusable only in view of certain annexed goods which can render it a better good for certain individuals. Hence the obligation to choose what is

⁴⁹ *In Epist. I ad Cor.*, viii, lect. 2: "Apostolus hic indulget, id est, permittit matrimonium, quod est minus bonum quam virginitas, quae non praecipitur et quae est majus bonum." See the complement to this, *IV Sent.*, d. 31, q. 1, a. 1 (*Summa Theol.*, Suppl., q. 49, a. 1) "In conjunctione autem viri et mulieris rationis jactura accedit, tum quia propter vehementiam delectationis absorbetur ratio, ut non possit aliquid intelligere in ipsa, . . . tum quia etiam propter tribulationem carnis, . . . et ideo talis conjunctionis electio non potest esse ordinata, nisi per recompensationem aliquorum ex quibus dicta conjunctio honestetur. . . ."

found to be noticeably better in the concrete must be accepted as an unchallengeable fact in the doctrine of St. Thomas.⁵⁰

Now that an obligation to choose the better good in the concrete has been established from the factual standpoint, it remains only to examine the manner of that fact. How does the ultimate practical judgment transmit or impose an obligation which does not exist in the proximate moral objects absolutely considered? To clarify this last phase of the question it will be necessary to retrace our steps backward over the psychological process of deliberation with a definitely moral preoccupation. This is necessary because it is usually granted, although disputed by Cajetan,⁵¹ that St. Thomas never intended the ultimate practical judgment to arrogate unto itself in its own right any mandatory prerogatives. It speaks indicatively (*modo indicativo*) and not imperatively, says St. Thomas.⁵²

⁵⁰ Billuart comes to this conclusion where he writes: "Quamvis enim laicus non teneatur simpliciter et vi praecepti ecclesiastici recitare officium aut audire Missam die feriali; quando tamen voluntarie et deliberate omittit, tenetur omittere secundum dictamen rationis ex generali praecepto, quo quilibet tenetur in omnibus actibus deliberatis agere ut homo et rationabiliter; quod praeceptum cadit non solum super actus sed etiam super omissiones actuum quatenus sunt voluntarii."

⁵¹ There is a dispute among the Thomists on the point whether *imperium* always follows election. Dominic Soto (*De Jure et Justitia*, Lib. 6, q. 1, a. 1) takes Cajetan to task for holding that the *imperium* or precept of prudence sometimes precedes the election. Cajetan had written: "... praecipere seu imperare potest intelligi dupliciter: Primo, respectu electionis absolute quia scilicet aliquis praecipit sibi ipsi eligere: ... alio modo, sumitur praecipere respectu aliorum, prout aliquis praecipit subditis suis . . . ; praecipere primo modo . . . , ad cujus rectificationem ponitur prudentia, est causa electionis: ... alio modo . . . materia et effectus electionis . . ." (Caj. in II-II, q. 88, a. 1, n. II). Medina agrees with Cajetan against Soto, John of St. Thomas, and the rest of the Thomists generally. But this seems to be a dispute over words and not realities. For it is very probable that Cajetan meant only that the last practical judgment of prudence preceding and regulating election borrows something of the nature of command from the will, as he so forcefully shows, I-II, q. 56, a. 3; q. 58, a. 5; q. 77, a. 2.

⁵² *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 17, a. 1: "Sed ratio potest aliquid intimare vel denunciare dupliciter: ... uno modo absolute; quae quidem intimatio exprimitur per verbum indicativi modi, sicut si aliquis alicui dicat: Hoc est tibi faciendum . . . Aliquando autem ratio intimat alicui, movendo ipsum ad hoc; et talis intimatio exprimitur per verbum imperativi modi, puta cum alicui dicitur, Fac hoc."

The imperative act follows election and immediately precedes or rather inaugurates execution.⁵³ But the ultimate practical judgment is certainly more than a mere signpost or hollow voice of the megaphone dispassionately and disinterestedly directing traffic; for when the imperative act countermands a supposedly ultimate practical judgment it must do so in virtue of a new process of deliberation culminating in a new and more acceptable ultimate judgment. If therefore the ultimate practical judgment does not speak authoritatively and definitively in its own name, still it can issue commands, though not definitively and efficaciously as does the imperium, in the name of a higher law, namely, the law of finality, from which it is ultimately derived and whose regency it transmits and applies to election in the concrete order. It is this borrowed authority or participated urgency plainly discernible in the ultimate practical judgment which now proposes itself for examination.

However, before abandoning our station at the confluence of ultimate practical judgment and election, we should be reminded of two important truths. First, that formal morality, the very warp and woof of a concrete moral action, is interiorly consummated in the psychological acts of judgment and election. The final touches of order or design are put to the canvas by the ultimate practical judgment and consequently all that pertains to form or selection is attributed to it. But this design is given concrete material embodiment or actual commitment to the realm of completely existential morality by the act of election which substantially elicits the concrete human action. The wedlock of these two elements, the formal contributed by judgment, the material or motional supplied by election, gives birth immediately to the formally constituted and interiorly consummated human action. All that transpires thereafter from the mutual interplay of intellect and will in their onward drive to fruition is to be considered as more or less consequential and executional. Hence the reason, that is, practical intellect and

⁵³ *Ibid.*, a. 3.

will, truly produces morality or human action as a veritable secondary cause.

Secondly, we must not lose sight of the fact that the object of these two acts, whether taken singly or in their wedded unity, is something complex. An ultimate practical judgment cannot even be conceived of without thinking of its reference to higher principles from which it descends. Neither could an act of election be called into being independently of its prehistory connected with and already begun in the intention. For the election bears, not upon a simple good, but upon a means whose essential correlative is the end or term of intention. These two notions, the complexity of object and the secondary causality of practical intellect and will, must be carried up the stream of morality with us to its primal sources if our exploration hopes to be adequately and successfully accomplished.

Moreover, they also suggest another statement of St. Thomas which will easily serve as a point of departure in our proposed analysis of the manner in which moral obligation to choose the concrete better good is engendered and constituted. The statement is this, that the moral rectitude or goodness of the election depends upon the moral rectitude of the individual's practical reason; but rectitude of individual reason or of ultimate practical judgment depends upon rectitude of intention or desire for the end which, in turn, is finally provoked by and dependent upon a correct apprehension and appraisal of the material ultimate end.⁵⁴ This is not just a passing remark dropped by St. Thomas at random. It plainly threads together every phase of moral action from its concrete and subjective consummation back to its ultimate objective basis, and St. Thomas returns to the statement many times in his special discussions on human activity. In its moral implications it involves a consideration

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, q. 19, a. 3, ad 2; “. . . Philosophus ibi loquitur de intellectu practico, secundum quod est consiliativus et ratiocinativus eorum quae sunt ad finem: sic enim perficitur per prudentiam. In his autem quae sunt ad finem, rectitudo rationis consistit in conformitate ad appetitum finis debiti. Sed tamen et ipse appetitus finis debiti praesupponit rectam apprehensionem de fine, quae est per rationem.” See also, *Ibid.*, q. 57, a. 5; II-II, q. 47, a. 6.

of the entire function of the virtue of prudence along with all connected virtues orientating prudence with the ultimate end. Hence it presents a framework for our whole problem.

Let us begin the analysis then by noting that, although prudence culminates in the act of *imperium* or application to the work of execution which immediately follows election,⁵⁵ nevertheless the ultimate practical judgment is that previous, integral part of prudence which pairs off with and rectifies the election formally and interiorly. Election and ultimate judgment stand related to each other as matter and form. On account of the intimacy of union between the two they are regarded as a single unit in the process of deliberation, namely, the formal term or conclusion of the process.⁵⁶ Viewed from an entirely subjective standpoint, this conclusion together with its moral rectitude derives immediately from two previous acts of will and intellect, namely, consent and counsel, which in their unified collaboration are referred to as the consultative function of prudence. Election after all is nothing but the ultimate refinement to the best selection, that is, to the better good out of many possible goods proposed by consultation. The inception of the entire process of deliberation dates back to the intention. The intention, indeed, from a purely subjective viewpoint gives the first impetus and sustaining momentum to deliberation or to the moral syllogism and also transmits morality through its various steps to the conclusion reached with the election. Thus it is that St. Thomas could say that rectitude of the individual's practical reason depends upon the rectitude of the intention.

Lest the Angelic Doctor be unwittingly accused of stark subjectivism or Abelardian tendencies in this matter,⁵⁷ we must

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, II-II, q. 47, a. 8; q. 51, a. 3, ad 3.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, I-II, q. 13, a. 3.

⁵⁷ Abelard seems to have made the intention the sole criterion of morality. In any case the following proposition: "Quod propter opera nec melior nec pejor efficiatur homo" was condemned by Innocent II (*Denz.*, 380). And Abelard indeed merited this censure inasmuch as he had said: "Non enim quae fiunt, sed qua animo fiunt pensat Deus: nec in opere sed in intentione meritum operantis vel laus consistit" (*Scito Teipsum*, cap. 3, P. L., col. 644).

hasten to note also the entirely objective basis on which he has worked out the moral syllogism. The tract on sin where the possibilities of reason's beguilement by passion are discussed offers a classic example of this point of view.⁵⁸ Its reassurance, however, is not necessary in view of the fact that we have observed already how the supreme principles of morality stand out as first objects of practical intellect and how their regency is handed down through the channel of extrinsic formal causality to the proximate moral object. We have seen too how youth at reason's dawning is obliged to ordain its entire lifetime to the true, material ultimate end by the volitional energies of intention. Speculation on the possibilities of such a sweeping orientation without instruction or grace from another does not concern us here. Perhaps it would be more pertinent to discuss the possibilities of ultimate practical judgment's initial rectification without the external example of a prudent monitor. But it is sufficient to note that acts of virtue are very reasonable to reason, that tried firmness is extrinsic to the essence of virtue which can be generated by one solitary act in the first instance, and more especially that the transition and conformity between objective right reason accepted as a corporate possession of prudent men and the individual's practical judgment is effected, at least in this matter of moral rectitude, through the channel of extrinsic formal causality. In this same manner, St. Thomas was careful to note, the rectitude of intention and ultimately therefore the rectitude of deliberation as a whole depends upon a correct appraisal of the material ultimate end which specifies the intention. Thus it is that through the entire scale of psychological acts, from first apprehension to election and onward,

⁵⁸ *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 77, a. 2, ad 4: ". . . ille qui habet scientiam in universali, propter passionem impeditur ne possit sub illa universali sumere, et ad conclusionem pervenire: sed assumit sub alia universali, quam suggerit inclinatio passionis, et sub ea concludit. Unde Philosophus dicit, in *VII Ethic.*, quod syllogismus incontinentis habet quattuor propositiones, duas universales: quarum una est rationis, puta nullam fornicationem esse committendam: alia est passionis, puta delectationem esse sectandam. Passio igitur ligat rationem ne assumat et concludat sub prima: unde, ea durante, assumit et concludit sub secunda."

objective reality shadows, as it were, the subjective phases of the moral act, informing and determining them through the channel of extrinsic formal causality. Hence the question of transmitting the regency of the law of finality, the question as to the manner in which moral obligation to choose the concrete better good comes about, and the question as to the borrowed authority of ultimate practical judgment all converge or coalesce into one problem susceptible of one and the same solution, namely, the proper analysis of the moral syllogism. We have discovered that intention of the end stands at the source of deliberation and all that is truly moral: from the subjective aspect it gives motional drive and material embodiment to the human act; from the objective aspect, and drawing upon the formal collaboration of practical intellect, it diffuses the law of finality, that is, commensuration with the end or relative moral entity, over moral action.

Now we need only to place the positive moral imperfection in the above setting, which most certainly is a thoroughly Thomistic atmosphere, in order to discover its true worth in the opinion of St. Thomas. First, the preference of a lesser good morally and concretely accepted necessarily involves a rejection of the better good morally and concretely accepted. For here are entailed comparison and selection which terminate definitively in the term or conclusion of the moral syllogism, and only one term or conclusion can be legitimately and correctly drawn from one set of premises by a definitive process of deliberation. We have seen already how and why the election, that is, the term or conclusion of deliberation, is psychologically and morally committed under obligation to the concrete better good, namely, to what in the long view of things pertinent is the more useful alternative for the worthy intention. St. Thomas has put the whole matter very succinctly where he says that to consider whether this or that must be done, which implies deliberation, is the work of practical reason. In such a line of consideration it is necessary to accept some one rule, namely, the end, as a standard of reference or measurement according to which the

better alternative is determined. For it is evident that man imitates, that is, desires, what is the better of various possible goods; but the better good is so determined in view of the end; and so it is necessary to accept some measure or end in deliberating upon what had better be done. This measure then, namely, the end, is the standard from which reason discourses to what must be chosen.⁵⁹ The synonymous appraisal of what is the better good, what must be done and what must be chosen, their convergence into one identical idea, their derivation from one and the same standard of reference and process of deliberation, cannot possibly escape the notice of thoughtful readers. It follows from this passage, which is typical of the cumulative evidence found in St. Thomas, that any choice embodying the lesser good, so determined by its reference to the true ultimate end, cannot possibly be derived either actually or virtually from this same ultimate end or measure as a legitimate conclusion of prudential deliberation. In such a process the regency of the law of finality is interrupted, and such a choice, being out of conformity with the supreme principle of morality, lacks the relative moral entity due to every human act in the concrete and consequently fails to realize that plenitude of being required for complete moral goodness.⁶⁰ Therefore, such a choice is perverted and the positive moral imperfection according to the principles and doctrinal inferences of St. Thomas must be labelled a sin.

The break in continuity between premise and conclusion, between law of finality and positive moral imperfection, reveals itself more openly at the juncture of proximate moral object

⁵⁹ *In III De Anima*, lect. 16: "Considerare utrum hoc sit agendum, aut hoc quod est deliberare, opus est rationis. Et in tali consideratione necesse est accipere aliquam unam regulam, vel finem, vel aliquid hujusmodi, ad quod mensuretur quid sit magis agendum. Manifestum est enim quod homo imitatur, id est, desiderat id quod est magis in bonitate, et id quod est melius; melius autem semper dijudicamus aliqua mensura: et ideo oportet accipere aliquam mensuram in deliberando quid magis sit agendum. Et hoc est medium ex quo ratio practica syllogizat quid sit agendum."

⁶⁰ *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 18, a. 1.

and ultimate practical judgment. It is the case of at least two goods, let us say A and B, both acceptable according to absolute moral entity but one morally superior, the other inferior, from the standpoint of utility to the true ultimate end of the individual, being more or less dispassionately presented on the screen of consultation. So far, so good. The principle of finality, the soul of right intention, still animates and breathes through the process. But deliberation is not yet finished. Those reports of consultation are not entirely speculative, since they were handed down by the individual from his stand on the ultimate end; but they are not entirely practical either, for the individual has not yet made them his own, that is, they have not yet coalesced with his free judgment or choice as form unites with its matter. In fact it could not happen at this stage of the process, because only one form can be the unifying principle of one accomplished reality such as a human action. Prudence, thus far the arbiter and moderator, must guide the discourse to its conclusion, must terminate all suspense of the moral syllogism by stating definitively that A rather than B must take the preference. This final word, disarming the will of its indetermination and provoking election, ends the process. The content of this final statement involves a complex network of relationships, namely, the mutual comparison of alternatives A and B, their comparison to the end and to the subject's needs in view of the end. If A, the concrete better good, is chosen, all of these relationships emerge to the plane of accomplished reality. If B is chosen, then the double relation of alternative to subject and subject to end is only half realized. The aspect or reference of true ultimate end to subject plus alternative is not molded into the co-ordinated structure of this choice. Hence this act, choice, breaks faith with the urgency, regency, and promises of the law of finality.

Certainly, the preference of what—in view of the true ultimate end—is a lesser good prudentially considered must also be foreign to its exigencies and to the dictates of a deliberation inaugurated by that same end. It was St. Thomas who said

that there will be a sinful perversion of election wherever a person prefers in his judgment of practical reason the lesser good to the better.⁶¹ Certainly, a choice of this sort involves some negligence, some inconstancy with regard to the intention's bearing upon the true ultimate end. Again, it was St. Thomas who wrote that it pertains to *prudence* to *prefer the better good to the lesser good*. Therefore, he continues, *to decline the better good pertains to imprudence*. But this is the part of inconstancy and consequently inconstancy, he tells us, pertains to imprudence.⁶² Let it be noted also that in the foregoing reference St. Thomas finally decides that inconstancy is a special sin against the virtue of prudence. What else but imprudence could a deliberate acceptance of spiritual disadvantage without hope of equivalent compensation or a willful rejection of spiritual gain possibly be? What else could St. Thomas have meant when he wrote in the *De Malo* that we seek in deliberation both the means and the better means of doing something? As he says, if a choice does not exclude the end altogether, but is *less useful* in its accomplishment, because our purpose is thereby retarded, then such a choice is a venial sin.⁶³

Hence the short circuit, though most apparent here at the juncture of election and consultation, no doubt lurks higher up the line somewhere among secondary motives and intermediary ends. The conclusion of ultimate practical judgment must, as

⁶¹ *Q. D. de Ver.*, q. 23, a. 8, ad 4: ". . . electio habet in se et rationis iudicium et appetitum. Si ergo aliquis iudicio praeferat id quod est minus bonum magis bono, erit perversitas electionis"; St. Thomas continues: ". . . non autem si praeferat in appetendo; non enim homo tenetur proseguere meliora semper in operando, nisi sint talia ad quae ex praecepto obligetur." But it is evident that St. Thomas in this latter half of the response passes over into the abstract order of external operation.

⁶² *Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 53, a. 5, Sed Contra: ". . . ad prudentiam pertinet praeferre maius bonum minus bono. Ergo desistere a meliori pertinet ad imprudentiam. Sed hoc est inconstantia. Ergo inconstantia pertinet ad imprudentiam."

⁶³ *Q. D. de Malo*, q. 7, a. 5: ". . . In consulendo enim quaerimus et per quod aliquid fieri possit et per quod aliquid melius fiat. . . . Cum vero acceptatur aliquid quod non excludit finem, sed tamen sine eo melius ad finem perveniri possit, quia in aliquo retardat a fine, . . . tunc est peccatum veniale."

we have already seen,⁶⁴ propose as the sole motive of election the better good, whether real or apparent, true or false. And the better good will turn out to be real or apparent according to the truth or fallacy of the practical judgment, since practical truth is moral goodness and practical fallacy, moral evil.⁶⁵ Truth or fallacy of the practical judgment is decided, St. Thomas tells us, according to practical intellect's conformity or difformity with a worthy intention of ends, the intermediary as well as the ultimate.⁶⁶ The corruption of choice in an individual once properly orientated to his true ultimate end normally begins with the more immediate motives and issues of daily life. For before the will definitely breaks allegiance with the ultimate end, it usually has already made petty compromises in favor of temporal pleasures and happiness.⁶⁷

The proximate ends of the moral virtues are intimately concerned with temporal goods. They also serve as intermediary premises through which practical reason must travel in resolving its particular conclusions to the ultimate end. In this wealth of detailed and subordinated relationships, the will and reason of man get lost and sometimes go astray. The will lingering overly long upon temporal goods refuses to heed the due measure appointed by prudence and instead drives the practical reason off the course in quest of excuses and on a fool's errand after the apparent motives of choice. St. Thomas touches the problem immediately when he says of pusillanimity, which is opposed to liberality or, better still, to magnanimity, that it stalks the heels of every flight from the better good of difficult matters of counsel.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ See footnote 35.

⁶⁵ *Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 20, a. 1: ". . . id quod est in intellectu affirmatio vel negatio est in appetitu prosecutio et fuga: et quod est in intellectu verum vel falsum est in appetitu bonum et malum."

⁶⁶ *In VI Ethic.*, lect. 10: ". . . si electio debeat esse bona quod requiritur ad rationem virtutis moralis, oportet quod et ratio sit vera, et appetitus sit rectus, ita scil., quod eadem quae ratio dicit, id est, affirmat, appetitus prosequitur."

⁶⁷ *Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 34, a. 5.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, q. 35, a. 4, ad 2: "Fuga autem bonorum quae sunt ad finem, quantum

In any case, to trick the lesser good out in a better's guise and finery, the practical reason must be inveigled into some voluntary error and culpable deceit.⁶⁹ If, therefore, in the transition from consultation to election, the false and the apparent should gain preference over the true and the real, this can only be on account of a falsification in the practical reason ultimately traceable to the fading influence of original premises and the ascendancy of less worthy motives incapable of actual or virtual contact with the true ultimate end. To displace the one true conclusion of prudence, a condition of will must arise which St. Thomas has envisaged in his statement that the will is already inordinate which loves the lesser good more than the better good.⁷⁰

Thus the will in its freedom can arbitrarily brush aside each contingent judgment of the practical reason, finally saying which pleases it according to its predispositions and determining which shall be ultimately practical by the very act of election. Such a privilege, however, fraternizes more intimately with license than with true liberty, for it seems to concede a freedom of ends as well as means⁷¹ and consequently it acknowledges no proper dependence of will upon the scale of subordination found in things. For all of that, the will cannot arbitrarily determine the voice of conscience or the definitive conclusion of prudence. The conclusion of prudence and the voice of conscience some-

ad ardua, quae subsunt consilis, fit per pusillanimitatem; quantum autem ad ea quae pertinent ad communem justitiam, fit per torporem circa praecepta."

⁶⁹ *In VI Ethic.*, lect. 10: "Intemperato videtur optimum sequi concupiscentiam, . . . quia malitia opposita virtuti pervertit iudicium rationis, et facit mentiri circa fines, qui sunt circa practica principia."

⁷⁰ *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 78, a. 1: "Est autem voluntas inordinata quando minus bonum maius amat."

Bartholomew Medina commenting upon this article had the following remark: "Ulterius est voluntas ex cujus deordinatione peccatum ex malitia originatur, nempe, quando propositis duobus bonis et unum est maius et alterum est minus scienter eligit quod est minus cum detrimento in superiori bono et in hoc peccato est error in prava electione, id est, imperio efficaci intellectus qui statuit hoc minus bonum esse amplectendum etiam cum detrimento boni superioris idque sine passione. . . ."

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, I, q. 62, a. 8, ad 3; q. 83, a. 4.

times, that is, in every good choice, coincide with the last practical judgment of reason. But this is not always the case, since the will in sinning can override conscience and prudence, though it cannot silence them altogether. It can put off the judgment of prudence out of deference to another more attractive judgment for its doubtful purposes, but it cannot make this particular judgment of prudence not be the judgment of prudence, or the only true alternative, for the individual here and now, after he has diligently considered and discovered this particular act to be the better good in view of the true ultimate end. Therefore, the positive moral imperfection involves at least a cast of imprudence and traces its lineage back to the vice of pusillanimity. No other conclusion can be logically deduced from the principles of St. Thomas which we have examined.

The argumentation may be summed up briefly in this way: A human act cannot be morally sound and perfect unless it be resolvable to and performed in conformity with the principle of finality which is the ultimate principle of morality. But a deliberate choice of the inferior good concretely considered is out of conformity with and beyond the regency of this principle. Therefore it is evil.

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(To be continued.)

CONCERNING SOME VIEWS ON THE STRUCTURE OF MATHEMATICS

673

*I lose my patience, and I own it too,
When works are censur'd, not as bad but new.*

—POPE.

I. INTRODUCTORY

MATHEMATICS has always had for civilized peoples an appeal sometimes practical, often fanciful, at times even theoretical and philosophical. The empirical mensuration of the ancient Egyptians, the mystical numerology of the Pythagoreans, the precision, to a degree, of the Grecian geometers, the highly mathematicized structure of modern science—all these, and many more, are but varied colors in the Joseph's coat of interest in mathematics. So it is not surprising that we read in Plato's *Republic*:

Mathematicians only dream about being, but never can they behold the walking reality so long as they leave the hypotheses which they use unexamined, and are unable to give an account of them. For when a man knows not his own first principle, and when the conclusion and intermediate steps are constructed out of he knows not what, how can he imagine that such a conventional statement will ever become a science?

This was a challenge of prime importance to all mathematicians of future ages, a challenge which the modern mathematician has eagerly taken up.

Within recent years mathematicians have been intensely busy in a critical study of the foundations of mathematics. A casual glance at the current mathematical literature will testify to this—a fact which is indeed one of the crowning glories of twentieth century mathematics. Today there are fearless and tireless workers in mathematics whose every ambition is to make as stable and firm as their talents allow the basis upon which the extensive development of modern mathematics rests.

They are determined to establish for mathematical theory a genuinely consistent structure. Profoundly critical is the current effort, with the almost inevitable result that the mass of its literature is scarcely within reasonable bounds. As a consequence, when we try to present a critique of this vast enterprise we find it almost impossible. It should be remembered that the problem is, in the most literal sense imaginable, an infinitely complex one; it is broader, deeper, and more ambitious than any other program as yet undertaken in scientific circles.

A brief study, therefore, of some points in what many consider one of the more interesting and significant parts of mathematics should prove welcome. In fact, the intense preoccupation of the mathematician with the foundations on which the whole intricate superstructure of modern mathematics rests has begun to awaken interest in other quarters.

At the very outset, however, I should like to make it clear that the reader cannot, and obviously should not, look for an exhaustive and compendious treatment of all questions connected with the foundations of mathematics. Besides requiring more genius than I possess, such a pretentious program would most certainly go beyond the more modest task which I have set for myself—*remarks concerning some views on the structure of mathematics*. Indeed, if this study will give only a cursory glance at this field of scientific endeavor—a veritable universe of thought—it will have accomplished something. Even an estimate of the far-reaching importance of all these varied efforts toward a critical evaluation of the fundamental principles of mathematical thought has some value. More than this is beyond the scope of these pages.

II. SOME VIEWS

To get a general view of the scope of these efforts before entering into the criticism of some points, we present the following bird's-eye view of the program of each of the important schools of modern mathematical thought. Although the easily discernible lines of demarcation between the original

foundation programs in mathematics have become somewhat blurred in the process of time through the introduction of variations, compromises, and the like, still the original division is best adhered to for the sake of clarity. We must admit, however, that there exist at present much confusion and irreconcilable differences of opinion on the whole problem of the foundations of mathematics.

a. *The Postulational School.* It has been said that from the postulational point of view mathematics is a *collection* of mathematical sciences. This should not be naively interpreted in the sense that mathematics for the postulationist consists simply of more or less autonomous postulate systems. The development of incompleteness theorems, which have played such an important role in the foundations of mathematics within recent years, shows quite clearly that to consider mathematics as the development of a single postulate system (a result that would follow if the sub-systems were autonomous)¹ is hardly possible today. Postulational mathematics has its essence not in the study of any particular kind of postulate system, but in the study ultimately of postulate systems as such. In fact, the nature of specific mathematical *subject matter* is an essentially subordinate problem from the postulational standpoint. We summarize with Stabler:

The first concern of the postulational school is to establish consistent sets of postulates for various mathematical sciences. It is usually desirable that a set of postulates be independent, and sometimes a set is desired to be categorical, sometimes non-categorical. It is notable that in establishing consistency, independence and categoricity, the proofs depend *first*, on the abstract nature of the postulates when the undefined terms are treated as abstract symbols; *second*, on the possibility of interpreting the undefined terms, and hence the postulates, in many concrete ways having

¹ As H. B. Curry has remarked: "If we could formulate a completely adequate logic, then these postulates could be added to the hypotheses of the theorems, and so all postulate systems could be subsumed under one master-system—logic. But the point is that we can not have any such logic." (*Bull. Amer. Math. Soc.*, XLVII (1941), 238, note 33).

psychological significance; *third*, on a process of judging that these postulates are satisfied or not satisfied for a given concrete interpretation or system; and *fourth*, on the assumption that each of the concrete systems used is self-consistent.²

b. *Logicism*. It is a central tenet of this school that mathematics forms an integral part of logic and as a consequence the members of this school hold that the search for the foundations of mathematical science must be made in logical theory. By the construction of a symbolic logic, they hope to proceed with the development of the science of mathematics. *That mathematics is an extension of formal logic* is a fundamental thesis of this school, as the writings of its adherents show,³ or in other words mathematics is claimed to be a development out of logic, in terms of *logical concepts*, from *logical principles*, and by *use of logical principles*. The logical school has concentrated its efforts on the analysis of mathematics in terms of a very small number of fundamental logical concepts, freeing it from all other non-logical undefined terms. From this it would follow that, once a logical system is accepted, the whole structure of mathematics can be deduced from it. It was with thoughts such as these in mind that Russell framed his now famous definition of mathematics:

Pure mathematics is the class of all propositions of the form "*p implies q*" where *p* and *q* are propositions containing one or more variables, the same in the two propositions and neither *p* nor *q* contains any constants except logical constants.⁴

c. *The Formalism of Hilbert*. In an effort to rid fundamental mathematical theory of its numerous paradoxes, Hilbert proposed to construct the system of classical mathematics as a mere calculus without regard to interpretation. Hence for the formalist the axioms are meaningless expressions of symbols, the structure of which is of greatest interest. This, Hilbert

² E. R. Stabler, "An Interpretation and Comparison of Three Schools of Thought in the Foundations of Mathematics," *Mathematics Teacher*, XXVIII (1935), 13.

³ See for example Russell, *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy*, 194-195.

⁴ *Principles of Mathematics*, 3.

thinks, is the most fruitful method of approach for establishing freedom from inconsistency. Accordingly the formalists believe that the search for the foundations in mathematics is not to be made in logic, but rather in certain *pre-logical* or *pre-mathematical* symbols which are preliminary to all logical thinking. Of these, as the solution is viewed by the formalist school, we have an intuitive knowledge which enables us to proceed to the development of mathematical theory. The formalists, relying on this intuitive knowledge of the marks *as marks*, proceed by formal argumentation according to definite rules to establish their *ideal propositions* from previously listed axioms. These *ideal propositions*, Hilbert asserts, are to be considered as images of thought belonging to the usual development of a mathematical science, yet *in themselves* the ideal propositions, as well as the marks in which they are expressed, are to receive no interpretation; they are meaningless statements expressed in terms of meaningless signs. In Hilbert's words:

To attain our end, we must make the proof as such the object of our investigation; we will thus formulate for this purpose a *Beweis-theorie*, which treats of the operations of the proof itself. . . . In our present investigation the proof itself is the concrete and exhibit-able thing; the reflection in terms of content follows only upon the proof.⁵

Parallel with the formal mathematics, but distinct from it, there exists a *metamathematics*, which includes intuitive mathematical conclusions, and in which also meaningful, immediately evident propositions are admitted. This sharp division between the formal mathematics and the meaningful metamathematics is an essential new point in Hilbertian formalism. Indeed, as has been remarked, according to Hilbert it is most proper to say that "mathematicians pass out of their proper domain when they attempt to give the marks meaning."

d. *Brouwerian Intuitionism*. For Brouwer and his followers mathematics is a *construction-process*, a building up of the

⁵ "Neubegründung der Mathematik," *Gesam. Abhand.*, III, 169-170.

science of mathematics relying on the faculty of the *intuition*, which he understands to be nothing more or less than the ability of the mind to enter into a close relationship with the determined complex situations about it and then to build up a mathematical system.⁶ Further, according to Brouwer mathematics is identified with *exact and precise formulation of thought*. Not only do we find, from the intuitionistic view, that particular sciences use mathematical forms, but also that they appear regularly in all our thinking life. Hence the intuitionist concludes that there exists no science, not even philosophy or logic, which can be made the basis of mathematics. For in any attempt to apply a philosophical or logical proposition in mathematics as a means of proof, we would find ourselves guilty of the fallacy of "vicious-circle" reasoning, since even in their very formation philosophical or logical propositions presuppose a mathematical organization of concepts. As a result of his *construction-process* view of mathematical theory, Brouwer does not feel that mere theoretical possibility of existence suffices for mathematical demonstrations, unless there is given a positive means of constructing the desired characteristic. This also leads to Brouwer's denial of validity to the *law of the excluded middle* when applied to infinite systems, for he claims that it is always uncertain whether for an arbitrary proposition concerning a definite infinite system either the necessary *construction* or the corresponding *obstruction* can be established. And as the law of the excluded middle leads to the acceptance of the proposition that every mathematical problem is—theoretically at least—solvable, this too merits intuitionistic disapproval. Briefly, then, we see that the concept of solvability, the principle of the excluded middle, and the indirect proof of purely existential propositions are boldly rejected by the intuitionist.

⁶ Brouwer's *intuition* seems to be not altogether unlike the *habitus principiorum* of Scholastic philosophy (cf. *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 50, a. 4; q. 57, aa. 1-2; also Jaime Castiello, "The Psychology of Habit in St. Thomas," *Modern Schoolman*, XIV, 8-12, particularly III).

III. A CRITIQUE

It is, of course, evident that any critique to be complete would necessarily require volumes and that consequently to attempt such an evaluation within a few pages, besides being undesirable here, would be to produce something entirely inadequate or unintelligibly condensed. Wherefore, we have decided, more or less arbitrarily, to limit our discussion to the following topics: *starting point* and *truth*. These, we think, afford sufficient scope in the light of our aim; they will, we think, prove interesting to the reader. It may be objected that we have chosen topics which are sterile or on which there is considerable unanimity among the various schools of thought. But this is not exactly the case, as will appear presently. And, if we accept the necessity of a foundation for mathematics in any sense, we must face these problems ultimately.

As is probably more or less obvious from the brief discussion presented above, there is not too marked a difference between the first three schools—the postulational, the logical, and the formalist. Indeed, from one point of view, we might say that there is only a difference of *degree* (not an *essential* difference) in the viewpoints of these three schools of mathematical thought. Each calls for a list of preliminary assumptions expressed in terms of preliminary ideas. The postulationists have their *postulates* and *undefined ideas*; the logical school has its *primitive propositions* and *primitive ideas* of logic; the formalist, too, presents his *axioms* in terms of *pre-mathematical* and *pre-logical* symbols. So it would appear that the only difference that exists between them is the degree to which they have pushed back the search for the preliminary assumptions and ideas, or in other words the depth of their analysis.

Yet, we think, there is a deeper and probably more significant feature present that furnishes the cause of the cleavage that certainly exists between Hilbert and the Russell-Whitehead group. Russell and Whitehead have on various occasions affirmed an extreme dependence of mathematics on logic; in

fact, they have made mathematics and logic one. This opinion, of course, Hilbert does not share. Rather he feels, and in this he is not alone, that such a position is most emphatically untenable. Wherefore we see that in a very proper sense there does exist an essential difference between these schools of mathematical thought, one of sufficient importance to warrant careful investigation and consideration in any understanding and interpretation of the two programs.

The essential difference between the postulational school and the formalists seems to consist in this that, for the latter, the foundations of mathematics are to be sought in our intuitive knowledge of certain pre-logical and pre-mathematical symbols formed into preliminary propositions which are rendered consistent by formal objective operations on them after making them free of all interpretation. The postulationist, on the other hand, holds that it is the possibility of finding a concrete interpretation of the postulates that fixes consistency. Some of the postulationists however, lean to the view that mathematics and logic are intimately related, though they make of logic a subordinate algebra in the mathematical scheme.

It is not immediately apparent which of the three schemes, considered as an *analytic theory* in the sense of Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics*, is to be preferred to the others as a starting point of mathematical science. Probably any one of the three, when sufficiently systematized, would prove as satisfactory as any other. This, however, is really not the most important point. As P. Hoenen has remarked in regard to the formalist scheme (his words, we think, may with equal justice be applied to the postulational and logical schemes as well):

Science has certainly traveled by other roads than that marked out by axiomatics. In short it [axiomatics] has failed as a foundation for science, and has not even attempted to explain the origin. Axiomatics as a *theory of knowledge of first principles* is utterly worthless.⁷

⁷ P. Hoenen, "A Field of Research for Scholasticism," *Modern Schoolman*, XII (1934-35), 17, italics added. The axiomatic school, moreover, shows a distinct

Yet we must not be too rigorous in our demands. Certainly in their attempt to reduce the fundamental principles of mathematics to a minimum they have rendered a great service to mathematics and also to philosophy. Although they may not have given an epistemological basis for the origin of the concepts, could not this be very easily supplied once their work is perfected?

There seems to be not too much difficulty on that score, but then perhaps I am overly optimistic. We might outline a system to serve as the epistemological basis of any one of the schools, it being considered as an analytical theory, somewhat as follows: 1) The intellect by its abstractive operation obtains from the sensible plane characteristics which are essentially mathematical. (Here there might be some difficulty, for all are not in agreement as to what is the exact nature of mathematical objects, but at least each one could abstract such notes as he considers mathematical.) 2) Then the mathematician may combine these notes in various ways to obtain the starting points or fundamental axioms of various branches of mathematics, taking care that they are compatible.⁸ 3) These notes may also be given an extended analogical meaning, thereby making possible schemes of mathematical treatment that are verifiable, not directly, but only analogically in the imaginative intuition. Such systems will then not have a literal interpretation, for example, in mathematical physics, but perhaps only an operational or analogical significance which, however, will not be without value.

This outlined plan,⁹ as it appears to me, in no way conflicts very radically with any of the schools of mathematical thought. Rather this manner of obtaining the fundamental assumptions of mathematics, be they mathematical or logical or pre-mathe-

tendency toward nominalism, which was so destructive of late medieval philosophy and which, unless checked, will produce the same barren results in the philosophy of mathematics.

⁸ Cf. St. Thomas, *Comm. in Periherm. Arist.*, I, iii, 4.

⁹ It has been discussed by the author with some detail in "A Theory of Mathematical Reality," *Modern Schoolman*, XVI (1938-39), 88-91.

mathematical and pre-logical, will serve as an epistemological basis upon which can be built a sound theory of mathematics. We may then use the postulational or the logical or the axiomatic scheme as an analytic theory in the sense of Aristotle and Aquinas.¹⁰ Without it, however (or some equivalent scheme), the fundamental assumptions and the consequent development (either postulational or logical or formalist) become an empty shell, a highly complicated structure without a base.¹¹ By themselves the different foundation schemes are, in truth, not worthy of the name, for they offer no explanation of the true first principles, the epistemological basis upon which the huge analytical edifice is to be raised. But with the scheme proposed the process is complete, for by the method outlined above we have a solid epistemological foundation for the development of mathematical theory.

The intuitionist, basing his mathematics on the fundamental mathematical intuition, which he says is nothing more than the ability to consider as distinct the fixed concepts and conclusions which appear regularly in our ordinary thoughts,¹² is perhaps in a better position to give a truly epistemological explanation for the origin of mathematical science. His scheme fits in

¹⁰ See *passim Posterior Analytics* of Aristotle and Aquinas' commentary on the same. We have, for example, in Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics*: "It is manifest, therefore, that we must come to our knowledge of the primary premises by induction; for by it also it is that even sense perception gives us the universal. Now of the thinking states by which we obtain truth, some are always true, while others admit of error (opinion, for instance, and calculation; whereas scientific knowledge and intellective intuition are always true). Further, no other kind of thought is more accurate than intellective intuition; whereas primary premises are more knowable than demonstrations and all scientific knowledge is discursive, there will be no scientific knowledge of primary premises; wherefore since nothing except intellective intuition can be truer than scientific knowledge, it will be intellective intuition that apprehends the primary premises, a result which follows also from the fact that demonstration cannot be the originative source of demonstration, nor, consequently, scientific knowledge of scientific knowledge. And if, therefore, it is the only other kind of true thinking except scientific knowledge, intellective intuition will be the originative source of scientific knowledge."

¹¹ See the remark of Plato quoted at the beginning of this paper.

¹² See Heyting, *Mathematische Grundlagenforschung. Intuitionismus-Beweistheorie*. (Ergeb. d. Math., 3, 4), 12.

very neatly with the one outlined above. His use of the mathematical intuition seems, from one point of view, to be nothing more than a *habitus* of the intellect which has long been recognized in Scholastic philosophy, and, from another, to be a mere rebaptizing of the abstractive power of the intellect.¹³ On the other hand, some see in Brouwer's intuition a legacy from Kant;¹⁴ however, despite certain external similarities between the two, we do not think such a position can stand exhaustive analysis. Still we must admit that this judgment is subject to correction, particularly since Brouwer himself (in *Intuitionisme en formalisme*) traces features of his theory back to Kant.

With regard to the second point of our discussion: what is the view of these programs of mathematical thought on the problem of "truth" in their systems? There is an extraordinary degree of unanimity in the responses of the first three schools. For the most part we find the opinions of the members of these schools almost universally expressed in such words as:

No one of the three schools can claim that the theorems of mathematics, or of logic, are absolutely true. Whether the postulates are logical or mathematical, the theorems are true at most in relation to the postulates and in relation to the further methods or rules of deductive procedure used, no matter whether such rules are tacitly taken for granted or are stated formally or informally.¹⁵

Obviously the writer of these lines is forgetting that the principles of logic flow directly from a true theory of being. They are not mere assertions made without firm foundation. The *laws of thought* are the direct counterpart of the *laws of being*. As Aquinas has very accurately said: "The first indemonstrable principle is that the same thing cannot at the same time be affirmed and denied; this is based on the notion of being and

¹³ Aquinas writes: "We know principles by simple intuition without a discursus" (2. *D. de Ver.*, viii, 15); cf. also Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, 67, and his *Introduction to Philosophy*, 163, note.

¹⁴ Black, *Nature of Mathematics*, 187-191.

¹⁵ Stabler, *op. cit.*, 32; this view may also be found in E. T. Bell, *Search for Truth*.

non-being.”¹⁶ From the consideration of *being* and its negation, *non-being*, we have immediately and with absolute certitude the *principle of identity*, the *principle of contradiction*, the *law of the excluded middle*, etc., which are fundamental in logic. These give us the method of procedure once we have established the “*truth*” of the objects upon which it is to be used. For these latter we must establish a kind of ontological truth, which will be discussed briefly a little later.

While we think it is necessary to recognize the *hypothetico-deductive* nature of mathematics, we understand it in the sense that *if there is any actuality satisfying the fundamental assumptions, then certain conclusions may be asserted concerning it*. Some would like to conclude from the hypothetico-deductive character of mathematics that the truth of a mathematical proposition is dependent on the verification of the hypothesis of the proposition. This, we think, is an incorrect interpretation of its hypothetical nature. In a very precise sense the truth of a hypothetical proposition, e. g., *If P, then Q*, is *absolute*. As John Toohey wrote:

In laying down this proposition [*If M is P, and S is M, then S is P*], we assert that the proposition itself is true, but we do not assert that any of its clauses is true. When we say that a given hypothetical proposition is true, we equivalently say that its consequence is valid. As a matter of fact, the truth of a hypothetical proposition and the validity of its consequences are one and the same thing. Hence, there can be no validity without truth.¹⁷

¹⁶ *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 94, a. 2. The reader might consult with profit C. H. Langford, “Concerning Logical Principles,” *Bull. Amer. Math. Soc.*, XXXIV (1928), 573-582. Quite to the point is the remark of E. Gilson: “But the very fact that a being represents itself by definition as inseparable from itself, is the basis of the truth which can be asserted of it: to assert the true is to assert what *is*, and to attribute to each thing the very being which defines it. The being of the thing therefore defines the truth of the thing and the truth of the thing is the foundation of the truth of thought. We think truly concerning a thing when we attribute to it the being which the thing is; in this way harmony is established between our thought and the thing’s essence, and the truth of our knowledge rests on this harmony. . . . The series of relations of truth is therefore but one aspect of the series of relations of being.” (*The Philosophy of St. Thomas* (rev. Eng. ed.), 347-348).

¹⁷ “Schiller’s Attack on Formal Logic,” *Modern Schoolman*, XVI (1938-39), 18.

For Brouwer, on the other hand, "truth" in mathematics is synonymous with "constructibility," that is to say, we must give a direct constructive proof of every proposition, and consequently in Brouwer's scheme the indirect method of proof of *reductio ad absurdum* is frowned down upon as absolutely inadmissible. And likewise to the *law of the excluded middle* is denied validity in certain cases, as well as other traditional principles which have been indicated above. In the light of the meaning assigned to "truth" by Brouwer and the intuitionistic school, all this is not unintelligible. Indeed his position on these points is consistent with his fundamental principle. But it is with the primary proposition that we have a quarrel.

While we are willing to agree that "constructibility" is *one* criterion of truth, still we cannot see our way to the acceptance of it as the *sole* criterion. It seems to us to be just as naive a position as that of the ancients who held that non-Euclidean geometry was a contradiction because it could not be imagined. We should rather hold that the question of truth in mathematics refers to the question of mental existence, by which we mean that it must have that *reality* which is attributed to those beings which can exist (although *de facto* they do not) or to those beings which (although they cannot exist as they are considered, e. g., universal or abstract ideas) are consistent and have *some* foundation in reality, either direct or analogical. This we feel is quite sufficient.

To this position Brouwer would undoubtedly reply that existence without constructibility is meaningless, which is an answer we could not accept.¹⁸ Our rejection however is subject

¹⁸ This appears to be nothing more than a confusion of the *subjective* state of our knowledge of the fact with the *objective* fact itself. E. T. Bell seems to be on the verge of the same error when he writes: "The contradictions that have been a thorn in the flesh of mathematics . . . may . . . be obviated by giving up our obstinate insistence that a particular assertion is necessarily 'true' or 'false'; instead we may label it 'undetermined' (as is done in three-valued logic) and proceed to consistent deductions" (*Search for Truth*, 260). Incidentally, in multiple-valued logics we think it would be better to speak of *opinion-values* or *certitude-values* instead of *truth-values*; but this is just by the way.

to some qualification. If the constructibility is extended to include *analogical* as well as *direct*, then (at least in part) Brouwer's position is quite equivalent to the one adopted in these pages; but if not, then we feel it must be discarded as an outmoded naiveté.

The *ontological truth* of the fundamental proposition or axioms, in so far as it may be so called, may be obtained in various ways. We can at times establish it by the mere analysis of the fundamental concepts, that is to say, by establishing the sociability of the component notes or characteristics (the intrinsic possibilities) of the proposed scheme. This suffices to make certain the ideal existence referred to above. But it perhaps is the most difficult method and obviously cannot always be applied with absolute certitude and equal success in all cases, particularly in more complex situations. However, there exists another means, mentioned by Maritain, which is available for establishing the consistency or intrinsic possibility.

In the mathematical order, the question *AN EST* pertains to the *ideal* existence (either *possible* or *rational*) of the being under consideration. . . . The ancients taught that in mathematics the judgment—by which one obtains knowledge—does not lead to the sensible, but to the imaginable. This should not be understood as meaning that each of the established conclusions needs to be verified in the imaginative intuition; but that they need to be verified by it either *directly* or *analogically*, that is to say, according as they can be constructed in the intuition or as they belong to a system of notions (as for example, the non-Euclidean, non-Archimedean geometries, etc.) derived from notions constructible in the intuition (as Euclidean geometry) and can find in this system an analogical interpretation.¹⁹

This furnishes us with a more or less simple scheme which may be applied in practically every case and one which affords considerable satisfaction to the intellect.

There are many other points which might be subjected to a critique with obvious profit: method, adequate object, etc. All these are not without their implications, philosophical as

¹⁹ *Degrees of Knowledge*, 68-69.

well as mathematical, but to discuss them all would involve us in an unsolvable dilemma. These pages show, at least, that the problem is not yet completely solved and as such is subject to further investigation.

Philosophers as well as mathematicians must recognize that, although the course must of necessity be bold, we cannot throw caution to the winds; while we continue to retain our prerogative of changing our opinion when circumstances demand it, we must, on the other hand, carefully guard against becoming like those who, in the words of the poet Pope,

praise at morning what they blame at night,
But always think the last opinion right.

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THE THEORY OF DEMOCRACY

523

PART IV

THE PRINCIPLES OF JUSTICE: CONSTITUTIONALITY

PURSUING our original plan, we shall now undertake, in this part and Part V, to demonstrate the proposition that Democracy is, on moral grounds, the best form of government. We have distinguished between the demonstrability of this thesis and its demonstration, between its intelligibility and its truth.²⁷⁶ We have shown that a moral hierarchy of political forms is conceivable; it remains to demonstrate that moral hierarchy and to show that actual conditions in the historic order of political events verify its existence.²⁷⁷

The demonstrability of the thesis was validated in Parts II and III, wherein it was shown how a diversity of existential common goods might specify morally unequal forms of government, subordinate to the generic moral distinction between all good and all bad forms, which must be made in terms of the ideal common good. Therein also it was shown that natural happiness, properly defined, is the ultimate end, distinct from the common good, which can be served more and less effectively by more and less just political institutions.

We shall, therefore, begin this section by stating the objection which remains to be answered, analyzing its significance, and defining the issue which it generates.²⁷⁸

1. The objection does not deny that some distinction can be made among types of good government. On the contrary, the objection affirms the traditional belief that there are three pure types (monarchy, aristocracy, and polity) and several mixed regimes. *But it insists that these political institutions are all*

²⁷⁶ Vd. Part III, in *THE THOMIST*, IV, 1, p. 124, and IV, 2, pp. 334-35.

²⁷⁷ Vd. Part II, in *THE THOMIST*, III, 4, p. 595.

²⁷⁸ Vd. Part I, in *THE THOMIST*, III, 3, pp. 428-29; and esp. pp. 430-31, where the objection now to be considered was first mentioned.

equally just. If one is judged better than another, either absolutely or relative to particular circumstances, such judgment expresses an ordering only in terms of utility, not gradations of justice. The better is simply a more efficient means to the common good, the social welfare, the well-being of the state itself, its enduring unity of peace. The elements of justice which make any type of government morally good are equally present in all good states. One good government differs from another only in the degree of efficiency with which it maintains the political community. It is morally indifferent whether a people choose this or that type of good government.

The position which we hold sharply contrasts with the traditional position taken by the objector. We think that genuine political progress is possible and has occurred—that, in the course of history, mankind has moved from less just to more just forms of political organization. The progress has been slow; much remains to be achieved; and at every stage of development, there have been political atavisms and regressions. The processes of political corruption are also “progressive” in the sense that the several perversions of good government are not all equally bad. A people can suffer less or greater injustice at the hands of those who degrade their institutions. Such progressive change in either direction would be impossible if the several types of good government were morally indifferent. History might then record transitions from less to more efficient governments serving the common good, or from less to more efficient ways of exploiting the community and alienating its good to those who exercise power for their own benefit. But that is all. We insist, however, that the facts of history show that that is not all. The weight of their evidence alone would suffice to refute the objection. But, of course, the facts of history must be interpreted, and so the issue cannot be resolved merely by going to the historical record. It is constituted by opposing theories, and it must be argued accordingly.

The issue is made by one major contention on our part, namely, that there are both generic and specific moral distinc-

tions among forms of government, that all the good forms of government differ from all the perversions by reference to a single generic criterion, and that within the generic grouping there are specific distinctions among forms of government as less and more just, more and less unjust. Under each form of good government, there may be further subordinate variations in modes of governmental organization which differ *inter se* with respect to degrees of efficiency in procuring and sustaining the grade of common good correlative with the grade of justice in that form. To render this contention intelligible, we explained the distinction between the *one* ideal common good as *finis causa* (the end which determines the generic distinction) and the *several* existential common goods as *finis effectus* (the ends which determine the specific distinctions); and to preserve the clarity of discourse, we decided to use the phrase "forms of government" wherever we wished to signify essentially distinct and morally unequal types of good government, and the phrase "modes of government" to refer to the accidental variants in administrative efficiency.²⁷⁹

To resolve the issue, two questions must, therefore, be answered. First, whether there are separable and cumulatively combinable principles of justice, so that one form of good government can be *more just* than another, or so that one perversion can be *more unjust* than another? Second, using the word "type" as neutral to the distinction signified by our use of the words "form" and "mode," whether the several types of good government considered by the objector are only modes of good government, or whether they are really distinct forms? The traditional position, espoused by the objector, must regard monarchy, aristocracy, and polity (and also the mixed regimes) as accidental modes. We, on the contrary, hold that there are three forms of good government, but we do not regard the traditionally named types as so distinguished. It will be necessary to clarify all the ambiguities surrounding these traditional names before we can show that these names partly signify

²⁷⁹ Vd. Part II, *loc. cit.*

essential (formal) distinctions, and partly accidental (modal) distinctions. We shall continue to use the words "Royal," "Republican," and "Democratic" to name the three forms of government in the order of their intrinsic moral excellence, and we shall use the traditional names to signify types that must be better defined before their essential and accidental elements can be separated.²⁸⁰

Lest it be supposed that the traditional position is no longer held, because the force of historical evidence has finally broken through centuries of misinterpretation, it may be useful to consider a contemporary exponent of the view we reject. Not only is the same historical evidence available to Father Wilfrid Parsons and ourselves, but in addition he is acquainted with the general outlines of our Theory of Democracy. He has only recently written an article which challenges our basic contention concerning the forms of government.²⁸¹ He does not undertake

²⁸⁰ For the definition of the Royal, Republican, and Democratic forms in terms of separable and cumulatively combinable principles of justice, vd. Part I, *loc. cit.*, pp. 418-25; Part II, *loc. cit.*, pp. 351-54. These prior discussions not only define the three forms, but determine the order and character of the progressive corruptions in each case, and also indicate how the traditionally named types are subordinated as modal variants of the several forms. In the case of only one name is there any danger of confusion: the word "democracy" must be used to name the perversion of polity according to the traditional classification, as well as to name the best form of government in our account. To avoid confusion, we shall always use "democracy" in the one case, and "Democracy" in the other; in fact, we shall usually capitalize the initial letters of the words naming forms of government, and not do so when the words refer to the traditional types. Thus, for example, the word "Royal" names the least just form of good government, but the word "monarchy" is compact of ambiguities: in one sense, it is equivalent in meaning to "Royal," but in another sense, it refers to a mode of governmental organization which may occur in any of the three forms of government.

²⁸¹ "St. Thomas Aquinas and Popular Sovereignty" in *Thought*, XVI, 62, pp. 473-92. Two years earlier than this article is a book by Father Parsons (*Which Way Democracy?*, New York, 1939), in which his position was substantially the same. The book antedates any publication of our views, whereas the article, intimating acquaintance with them, attempts to maintain, against us, the "traditional doctrine, which consistently holds that every government which is just in itself is indifferent as to its form" (p. 491). Father Parsons' polemical intention is suggested, at least, by his opening words: "At the outset, and to avoid misunderstanding, let me state that the title of this paper is not 'St. Thomas and

to criticize our analyses of the common good and of natural happiness, but he does directly contradict our proposition that there are several forms of good government unequal in their intrinsic justice. Father Parsons will, therefore, serve admirably to personify the objector against whom we must argue. In this recent article, he writes: "What I expect to show in this paper is that St. Thomas embraces in his general notion of good government, as common to all particular forms, the three ideas of a rule that is for the common good, is representative of the people, and is derived immediately from the community itself. This threefold idea I call popular sovereignty. It is not, I repeat, democracy."²⁸²

According to Father Parsons, then, the moral goodness of government is determined by three inseparable elements; hence for any type of government to be good it must possess all three, and so in its moral goodness one type of government cannot be distinguished from another. The issue should be clear in these terms. Let us not confuse it by reference to St. Thomas or anyone else. The point is not affected by what St. Thomas thought about democracy or Democracy. It seems reasonably clear that he never thought about Democracy as we conceive it: what we have defined as the third and highest form of govern-

Democracy' but 'St. Thomas and Popular Sovereignty.' The two are not the same. Democracy, as I understand it here, is a form of government. As a form of government, democracy will not add anything to the general concept of good government except the manner in which it is exercised" (p. 473). And at the end he says, "we are not justified in concluding from this that St. Thomas was an early exponent of democracy. This particular form of government was for him only one of several possible forms, all of which, to be legitimate, must possess the characteristics I have outlined" (p. 492). The word "form" as Father Parsons uses it obviously has the meaning we would express by "mode of government."

²⁸² *Loc. cit.*, p. 474. "Among those things common to all forms are, first, government for the people, that is, government for the common good; and second, representative government, which (whether its form be monarchical, aristocratic, democratic, or a mixture of the three) will rule in place of the people and in its name. Finally, as a corollary of the second point, this rule for the common good, involving as it does authority deriving ultimately from God, will have its immediate derivation in the community, which has transferred its own power directly to the government which rules it" (*ibid.*, p. 473).

ment could not readily have been conceived by anyone living under ancient or mediaeval conditions. It seems even clearer that, supposedly following Aristotle, St. Thomas thought that democracy was the most tolerable of corrupt governments and that polity (which is what Father Parsons obviously means when he uses the word "democracy" to name a good institution) was the least satisfactory of the pure types of good government. Nor is the point at issue whether St. Thomas held the theory Father Parsons attributes to him, namely, that all just governments have the same essential formation. As we shall show, it is difficult to determine precisely what view St. Thomas held on this proposition, but whether he considered it true or false, there can be little doubt that Aristotle regarded it as false. We shall use Aristotelian political theory to demonstrate its falsity, but our aim is not to defend Aristotle, even though our interpretation of the *Politics* cannot be easily separated from the theory we are defending. Nevertheless, it is the truth of that theory, and only that, which we shall defend.²⁸³

²⁸³ Just as no ancient or mediaeval political thinker could readily conceive Democracy as we have defined it (as a state superior to the Republic, which the ancients understood), so it is extremely difficult for any mediaeval thinker, living in a feudal society and influenced by late Roman conceptions of law and government, to speak plainly on the point about which Aristotle is himself so plain, namely, the intrinsic superiority of Republican (i. e., constitutional) over Royal government. St. Thomas's commentary on the *Politics* cannot be taken as expressive of what he himself thought, but even the commentary is not clear on the point at issue, and the political passages in his other writings are even less clear. We shall return later to a fuller explanation of why the sharp Aristotelian opposition between Royal and Political government was blurred by the mediaeval tendency to conceive almost all contemporary regimes as both Royal and Political. Terms which Aristotle opposed to one another become, in the mediaeval treatment, associated and compatible. Hence the Aristotelian insight that Political (i. e., Constitutional) government is essentially superior to the Royal regime is either entirely lost or has its profound significance dissipated in the middle ages. That is why it is so much easier to show that Father Parsons deviates from Aristotelian political thought, than from the theory of St. Thomas. We have called Father Parsons' position traditional, but if our account of Aristotle is correct, it is a *traditional misinterpretation* (popularized by Scholasticism) of Aristotelian political philosophy and, to the extent that St. Thomas succeeds in being Aristotelian, of his thought also.

That Father Parsons misinterprets Aristotle's thought about the forms of govern-

In order to make the issue as precise as possible in terms of the theory we are defending, let us convert Father Parsons' position into an objection comprising two distinct denials. (1) We hold that Royal government is good (i. e., has some justice in it) because it can be for the common good, even though it is not "representative" and does not involve "popular sovereignty" in Father Parsons' sense of these words. This, of course, he denies, and must perforce regard Royal government (in our sense) as *not just at all*, as somehow equivalent to despotism or tyranny.²⁸⁴ (2) We hold that Democratic gov-

ment is evidenced by the fact that he relies entirely on the distinction between good and bad governments made in *Politics*, III, 7. Vd. *op. cit.*, p. 478. Furthermore, in his earlier book, *Which Way Democracy?* Father Parsons attributes to St. Thomas the notion that "even the absolute monarch, so called, exercises legislative functions as a representative of the community" (p. 149). Whether or not St. Thomas thought this, it is a thoroughly unaristotelian notion. Absolute monarchy, for Aristotle, was Royal government; constitutional, or limited, monarchy, was not a special form of government at all, but only an accidental mode of Political or Constitutional government. Although Father Parsons quotes a famous passage from Sir John Fortescue's *De Laudibus Legum Angliae*, wherein Fortescue distinguishes an absolute royal regime from one which is, in his words, both regal and political, Father Parsons' commentary thereon tends to obliterate the distinction entirely, for he sees no incompatibility between absolute and constitutional government. Vd. *op. cit.*, pp. 157-59. And, finally, when Father Parsons does consider the possibility of absolute monarchy or absolute government, he regards it as absolutely bad, identifying it with vicious despotism or tyranny. Vd. *op. cit.*, pp. 115-17. (Cf. on this last point, his recent article "The Mediaeval Theory of the Tyrant" in *The Review of Politics*, IV, 2, pp. 142-3). For Aristotle, quite clearly on the contrary, the Royal regime, which is always absolute, always non-constitutional, is neither tyrannical nor despotic, but a just form of government relative to certain circumstances. An Aristotelian could not classify it either as absolutely bad (a perverted form of government) or as absolutely good, and hence an Aristotelian would have to insist that though the Royal regime is good, it is intrinsically and essentially less good than another regime, namely, the Political or Constitutional. Hence for an Aristotelian there is this much of a moral hierarchy of governmental forms. Hence whether or not Father Parsons is right in his contention that all types of good government have the same moral qualities, his position does not accord with that of Aristotle.

²⁸⁴ Vd. his comment on Ptolemy of Lucca and Egidius Colonna in "The Mediaeval Theory of the Tyrant," *loc. cit.*, pp. 142-3. Note also his insistence that the just Prince is not *legibus solutus*, despite the fact that St. Thomas, following the traditions of Roman law as codified by Justinian, understood "*princeps legibus solutus est*" to mean "free from the coercive force of law." In order to regard every just

ernment is intrinsically better (i. e., has more justice in it) than Republican government, because it abolishes fixed privileged classes based on unjust criteria of birth and wealth and because it justly distributes the franchise of citizenship, whereas Republican government, as we conceive it, involves the unjust exclusion of some members of the population from citizenship. Father Parsons must deny this. His three elements of political justice do not permit him to recognize this distinction and gradation. When he says that good government must be "representative of the people," he does not recognize the ancient and mediaeval differentiation between the *total population* (including slaves, serfs, subject aliens, etc.,—all the disfranchised) and *the people* (including only those having political status).²⁸⁵ In consequence, Father Parsons is forced by his position to regard exclusions from citizenship as raising no question of justice, for once he recognized this question, he would also have to admit the possibility that within the sphere of constitutional government, one form of government might be more just than another in its determination of who *the people* are. Such an

monarch as constitutional somehow, Father Parsons makes "*legibus solutus*" mean "free from the law, directly as well as coercively" and so interprets St. Thomas as saying that the Prince is *not legibus solutus*. Vd. "St. Thomas Aquinas and Popular Sovereignty," *loc. cit.*, p. 481.

²⁸⁵ Cicero's definition of *the people* (*De Republica*, I, 25), which St. Augustine adopted (*De Civ. Dei*, II, 21), and which became current throughout the middle ages (vd. *Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 42, a. 2),—that *the people* is not any crowd, but only those united in a fellowship recognized by law—certainly does not conceive *the people* as coextensive with *the population* of a political community, for many will be subject to its power who do not stand as equal in citizenship before the law. It is highly significant that Father Parsons who insists upon *popular sovereignty* never raises the question, who are the people? Cf. A. J. Carlyle, *Political Liberty*, Oxford, 1941: Pt. III, Ch. 8, "Who Are Members of the Political Community?" Carlyle suggests that this question was never seriously debated before the 17th century, and even then only rarely. This becomes the major political issue in the 19th century. Failing to recognize its importance, Father Parsons' conception of "popular sovereignty" as the common character of all good government abstracts from the problem of distributive justice in regard to suffrage and so obliterates the distinction between the Republican and Democratic forms. This may be merely neglect on his part, but we feel it necessary to interpret his position as denying that any gradation of justice is involved in this distinction.

admission would contradict his own proposition that all good governments are equally just, and would lead him to agree with us about the criterion which makes the modern ideal of Democracy a higher one than that of the ancient Republic, with fixed social classes and a large disfranchised population. But as his position now stands, he must deny that the Royal (i.e., absolute) regime can be just at all; he must deny that Democracy is a more just form of constitutional government than a Republic; he must, in short, affirm that all good government is Republican in principle, and that all subordinate types of good government are morally indifferent.²⁸⁶

The foregoing analysis of the objection into two distinct denials, permit us to divide the work of meeting the objection between this Part and Part V to follow. Here we shall answer the first denial by proving that Royal government is a good form of government, albeit the least just of the three forms and, even so, just only relative to certain circumstances. In Part V we shall answer the second denial by proving that Democratic is more just than Republican government, and hence that it is the most just of the three forms, considered absolutely.²⁸⁷

²⁸⁶ The reader will understand that, though the word "Republican" here is used in our sense, its meaning is strictly equivalent to Father Parsons' phrase "popular sovereignty." Father Parsons' threefold conception of popular sovereignty excludes what we mean by Royal government, on the one hand, and is unable to recognize the moral differentiation of what we mean by Democratic government, on the other hand. In our opinion, therefore, Father Parsons' theory proves too much and too little. Moreover, it cannot account for the dynamics of political progress and decay; it fails to distinguish the problem of the relatively just and unjust from the problem of the absolutely unjust; it finds no ambiguity in the phrase "rule for the common good" because it does not recognize the distinction between the common good as *finis causa* and *finis effectus*. Vd. Part II, *loc. cit.*, pp. 624-26, and esp. fn. 80. These critical observations are repeated here for the sake of focussing the reader's attention upon the issue. We are obliged, of course, to do more than say that Father Parsons is wrong. We must demonstrate it. That is the work which lies ahead.

²⁸⁷ Because of the way the objection is raised, the first of these two steps of proof seems to be directed toward establishing that there is a good form of government which is inferior in justice to Republican or Constitutional government; but this, it will be realized, is equivalent to establishing that Republican is superior to Royal government in the hierarchy of justice.

The two denials being clearly separable and so answerable separately, reasons of convenience would warrant our procedure. There is, however, a much deeper reason for the way in which we shall proceed. The problem of the forms of government is not only the central problem in political philosophy, but the one which usually turns the political philosopher into an apologist for the political institutions of his own day. To some extent this is unavoidable. The political theorist cannot, like the metaphysician or moralist, abstract his thought from the historical perspective in which he views the institutions of the past and present. His only protection against historical entanglements—which prevent him from rising to the plane of universality proper to philosophy—is to be explicitly conscious of them. Unfortunately, most of the great political thinkers of the past had little or no historical sense. They failed to recognize how much their analytical vocabulary was colored by the imagery of local institutions. Though Cicero and St. Thomas, Hooker and Rousseau, use what appear to be the words of Aristotle's *Politics*, the meanings are not the same. Nor, of course, are they entirely different. The basic words which run through the whole course of political thought—the words used in naming kinds of government—record, in their ambiguities, the variation and accretion of meanings which have resulted from the use of these words to describe institutions peculiar to a particular epoch. This is especially true of the words which are crucial to the present analysis—"royal," "despotic," "political," "constitutional," "republican." We cannot escape from the limitations of our own historical perspective, but at least we can try to use our historical knowledge for the sake of universalizing the basic distinctions. To be aware of ambiguities is to be able to resolve them. To be aware of history is to be able to transcend it—somewhat!²⁸⁸

²⁸⁸ While we are grateful to the labors of modern historical scholarship in the field of political thought for the knowledge that there are discontinuities as well as perseverations in the apparent tradition which binds each great thinker with his predecessors and successors, we cannot approve the scholar's tendency to exaggerate

It is this full awareness of treacherous ambiguities and historical accidents which dictates the procedure we shall follow. We shall attempt to prove the validity of the essential distinction between Royal and Political (or Constitutional) as forms of *good* government, in terms of Greek political thought and by reference to Greek institutions. We shall try to abstract from the Greek context the universal principles underlying this distinction—principles which will then be applicable to an understanding of Roman, mediaeval, and modern situations. But we will not make the error of thus applying them without due regard for altered circumstances. We shall not fail to recognize that when a Roman, a mediaeval, or a modern thinker uses Aristotelian words, he is referring to institutions unknown to Aristotle and often in ignorance of the institutions to which Aristotle referred. But this will not prevent us from verifying the truth of the Aristotelian analysis, for if that analysis is

the difficulties of finding the universals which history tends to hide. The historian of political philosophy is too often not a philosopher himself, and is sometimes even suspicious of the philosopher's claim to be able to reach the sort of truth that history can conceal, but cannot corrupt. Professor C. H. McIlwain is extremely helpful in pointing out the discontinuities which demand caution against a superficial reading of Roman and mediaeval political literature, as if the words therein meant the same thing as they did in their Greek origins. (Vd. *The Growth of Political Thought in the West*, New York, 1932, esp. pp. 22, 77 ff., 80 ff.) But he goes too far in the opposite direction of supposing that the universal is inextricable from the meshes of history. In another book which exhibits this tendency even more extremely, he writes: "The changing world always makes earlier times incomprehensible" (*Constitutionalism Ancient and Modern*, Ithaca, 1940: p. 81); and thereupon quotes the apt words of Sir Henry Spelman: "When states are departed from their original Constitution, and that original by tract of time worn out of Memory; the succeeding Ages viewing what is past by the present conceive the former to have been like to what they live in; and framing thereupon erroneous Propositions, do likewise make thereon erroneous Inferences and Conclusions" (*Reliquiae Spelmannianae*, London, 1727: p. 57). But historical research serves to counteract the wearing of memory, thereby enabling us to correct erroneous propositions and to avoid false inferences. Sir Henry accurately describes the plight and fallacies of political philosophers who had to proceed without the benefit of historical research; but the philosopher who stands upon the scholar's shoulders can escape these pitfalls and, moreover, should be able to see further than the scholar can—or, shall we say, *deeper*, because the philosopher's aim and method is to penetrate beneath the changing surface which the historian has enabled him to view comprehensively.

philosophically true, it is not Greek but universal. All the later variants in both language and thought will be seen as accidental to the essential pattern of that analysis.

An important qualification must be added at once. The analysis to which we refer concerns *only* the basic distinction between Royal and Political regimes, and the fundamental principle of constitutionality in government. We are not saying that Aristotle's *Politics* contains the whole truth of political theory; far from it, for it contains an essential falsity concerning another principle, consequent to constitutionality, namely, the principle of political equality. Even as the Roman and mediaeval variations do not alter the essential truth of the Aristotelian theory of constitutionality, so they do not remedy the essential falsity of Aristotle's view of who *the people* are, however much both Roman and mediaeval Christian thought may diverge from Aristotle's error about natural slavery. It remained for modern, almost recent, political philosophy to argue for the truth that ultimately *the people* must be coextensive with *the population*.

The procedure we shall follow has, therefore, another advantage. It enables us to separate the demonstration that Political or Constitutional government is better than Royal, from the demonstration that Democratic is better than Republican government.²⁸⁹ The first demonstration (answering

²⁸⁹ Republican and Democratic government are both Political (or Constitutional). The difference between Republican and Democratic forms is an essential difference subordinate to the essential difference between Royal and Political forms; as, in the case of living things, the division of animal life into brute and human is an essential division subordinate to the division of biological life into vegetative and animal.

We shall, therefore, use the words "Political" and "Constitutional" rather than "Republican" to name the precise opposite of Royal government, when we are not concerned with the subordinate division of Constitutional government. We shall use the word "Republican" only when we are concerned with that form of Constitutional government which is better than Royal government, but not absolutely best. In whatever respects Constitutional government is superior to Royal government, the subordinate forms of Constitutional government are equal, for both Republican and Democratic forms participate in the essential nature of Constitutional

the first part of the objection, the first denial) can be accomplished even if there are natural slaves, the despotic government of whom is *not unjust* in any way, and even if, in addition, there are large groups of the population whom it is *not unjust* to disfranchise or to exclude from citizenship. To accentuate the separateness of the two problems (and hence the separability of the political principles involved), we shall proceed here upon assumptions that we know to be erroneous and which we shall later demonstrate to be false.²⁹⁰ We shall assume that there are natural slaves, men whose natures are such that it is just to use them entirely as means to the common good of the household, the common good of the state, and the happiness of its citizens. Such members of the civic population support the life of *the people* (the citizenry), but they have no membership in the latter group.²⁹¹ This assumption will enable us to make a clear and sharp distinction between the royal and the despotic regimes, for these tend to get confused, in both language and thought, whenever natural slavery is denied.²⁹² We shall also

government. It is only within the sphere of Constitutional government itself that the superiority of the Democratic over the Republican form can be demonstrated.

²⁹⁰ Vd. Part V *infra*. We must correct here the announcement made in fn. 272 and 275 of Part III *supra*, that the argument against natural slavery would be undertaken in this Part rather than Part V.

²⁹¹ "A state exists for the sake of a good life, and not for the sake of life only; if life only were the object, slaves and brute animals might form a state, but they cannot, for they have no share in happiness or in a life of free choice." (Aristotle, *Politics*, III, 9, 1280^a33). "States require property, but property, even though human beings are included in it, is no part of the state; for a state is not a community of living beings only, but a community of equals, aiming at the best life possible" (*ibid.*, VII, 8, 1328^a35). Cf. St. Thomas: "Only those who render mutual assistance to one another in living well truly form part of an assembled multitude. For if men assembled merely to *live*, then animals and serfs would form a part of the civil body" (*De Reg. Princ.*, I, 14). Cf. *ibid.*, I, 1: "The serf is one whose whole being belongs to another."

²⁹² Father Parsons is not alone in this confusion. Most Thomists who suppose, truly or falsely, that St. Thomas disagreed with Aristotle on the question of natural slavery, tend to identify what Aristotle distinguished as royal and despotic, finding only one regime, not two, to be contrasted with the political regime; or, what is worse, they oppose despotic and political, and tend to identify royal with political. The clear distinction of these three terms—*despotic*, *royal*, and *political*—

assume that, in addition to natural slaves (whether these be, in Aristotle's terms, slaves of the domestic or slaves of the political economy, private or public slaves), there are other justly disfranchised groups in the population—subject races, aliens, men who, for one reason or another, are not admitted to citizenship. Relative to the economic and cultural circumstances of Greek, Roman, and mediaeval society, such disfranchisements may have been justifiable. Whether exclusion from full membership in the commonwealth is justifiable *only relative to certain historic conditions*, or whether there are *absolute grounds* for justifying the exclusion of some human beings from political participation, are questions we shall consider subsequently, not here. Here our only aim is to define the principle of constitutionality in the light of the valid distinction between Royal and Political government; and for the purpose of understanding the difference in status between the *subjects* of a *kingdom* (purely Royal regime) and the *citizens* of a *commonwealth* (purely Political regime), it is absolutely indifferent whether all or only some elements in the civic population are admitted to citizenship.²⁹³ It is also indifferent to our basic problem that in the middle ages there arose the anomalous combination of the kingdom and the commonwealth to form what Fortescue called “a political kingdom”—a *regimen regale et politicum*. Unless we first understand the basically opposed

is absolutely indispensable for a correct interpretation of Aristotle's thought and, we might add, for St. Thomas's as well. Vd. Yves Simon, *Nature and Functions of Authority*, Marquette, 1940: pp. 35 ff. and fn. 12, wherein Professor Simon appears to be guilty of this misinterpretation and, paradoxically enough, charges Aristotle with being guilty of equivocation in his discussion of the several regimes. We shall return to this point later. Vd. fn. 331 and 355 *infra*. Cf. Dr. Winston Ashley's comments on Simon's analysis, in his essay *The Theory of Natural Slavery*, Notre Dame, 1941: pp. 130 ff.

²⁹³ It should furthermore be observed that there may be natural slaves and other disfranchised groups in a kingdom, as well as in a commonwealth; only some men may be admitted to the political status of being subjects of the king. The contrast between slavery and subjection in a kingdom is, therefore, parallel to the contrast between slavery and citizenship in a commonwealth. But what we are concerned with is only the contrast between subjection and citizenship, between the condition of those who have genuine political status under royal and under political rule.

terms (royal and political) in their purity, we shall not be able to understand what curious manner of thing the middle ages instituted by trying to combine the *apparently uncombinable*.²⁹⁴

Having explained our procedure, we now briefly outline the steps we shall take to carry it out. In Section 2, immediately following, we shall expound the Aristotelian distinction between royal and political regimes and draw therefrom a definition of the principle of constitutionality. In the course of doing this, we hope to make precise the analytical vocabulary that must be used throughout the rest of our discourse, so that we can later clarify the ambiguities of usage resulting from Roman and mediaeval variations on the same theme. In Section 3, we shall consider the circumstances relative to which Royal government can be justified, even though, absolutely regarded, it is less just than Constitutional government. On this point, we shall compare the thought of Aristotle with that of Cicero, St. Thomas, and John Stuart Mill—to take representatives of different epochs—and here it may seem surprising to some that Mill, the great 19th century liberal, should be more thoroughly Aristotelian in his conception of the problem than either Roman or mediaeval thinkers.* In Section 4, we shall deal with the difficult, anomalous, and almost paradoxical, case of the peculiarly mediaeval institution—the so-called “political kingdom” in which the contrariety of *royal* vs. *political* seems to be sublimated into a conjunction of royal *and* political. In this connection, we must redefine the principle of constitutionality in

²⁹⁴ This perfectly illustrates the problem of formulating the truth universally enough to make it applicable to Greek and mediaeval political experience. The mediaeval “political kingdom”—which is not to be identified with what Aristotle called “constitutional monarchy”—is unintelligible apart from the framework of a feudal society, and an aetiology which comprehends the transition from feudalism to nationalism. Without being transplanted in time, Aristotle could not have understood it; nor did mediaeval thinkers properly understand Aristotle to the extent that they naturally read their own limited and quite peculiar political experience into his words.

* *Editor's Note:* The whole of Part IV is too long for publication in a single issue. Only the first three sections appear in this issue, the remaining three to be published subsequently.

terms of the political sanctions which make it effective in practice. The chief problem here is to determine whether the mediaeval *regimen regale et politicum* can be classified as essentially Royal or as essentially Republican (constitutional) government—or as neither, being somehow *intermediate* between both. Strictly speaking, the *regimen regale et politicum* cannot be interpreted as a “mixed regime” in the ordinary sense of that term, which properly refers to the mixture of elements within purely constitutional government. This will be shown in Section 5, where we shall explain why what are called “mixed regimes” are possible only under Republican, never under Royal, government. To do this, it will be necessary to separate the theory of the mixed regime as it is found in Aristotle, from the Roman and mediaeval variations on this theory which tend to blur important points. Finally, in Section 6, we shall try to relate our analysis of diverse regimes and our conception of constitutionality to the principles of political justice, so that the moral hierarchy of the three forms of good government can be understood in terms of criteria by which one can be judged as absolutely more just than another, though it may also be less expedient than that other under special circumstances. To complete what is here begun will, of course, require proof that Democratic government is as essentially distinct from Republican government, as Republican is from Royal. This will be the work of Part V to follow. We beg the reader to consider all of Parts IV and V as a single argumentative whole. The careful reader need not be enjoined to wait until he has seen the argument through before he judges. He will appreciate that the elaborateness of our discussion is due to a desire fully to explore all the analytical alternatives and consequences.

2. In Book I of the *Politics*, and especially Chapters 1, 5, and 12, Aristotle presents an exhaustive enumeration of the kinds of regimen which men can exercise over others, whether these be things, brute animals, or other men. It is here that he makes his most fundamental distinction between the two sorts

of regimes which can exist in a civil community. Though he also considers the domestic community, because it is a part of the state, and because the several dominions which therein occur must be compared with civil regimes, he is, as a political philosopher, primarily concerned with civil government, not with the administration of a household.

Now it is usually supposed that Aristotle classifies the forms of civil government in Books III and IV, there dividing good from bad, and setting forth the species and sub-species of each. Apparently that is the case, but the significance of the discussion in these later books, as well as Books V and VI, cannot be properly understood unless seen in relation to the fundamental distinction between the royal and the political government of a civil community, as made in Book I.

To suppose that there is no relation between the two kinds of government distinguished in Book I and the many types of government classified in Books III-IV would do violence to the unity of Aristotle's treatise. If the twofold distinction and the manifold classification are not *unrelated* to one another, they must be *ordered* to one another, and here the reader seems to be faced with three possibilities: (1) they are coordinate; (2) the distinction between royal and political government is subordinate to the classification of governments into monarchy, aristocracy, polity, tyranny, oligarchy, and democracy, and all the sub-species of each; (3) the subordination is in the opposite direction. Of these, the first is unintelligible, and the falsity of the second is readily seen in the fact that royal vs. political will not divide polity, or oligarchy, or democracy. But if one classification is subordinate to another, the terms of the major must be capable of perfect subdivision by the terms of the minor. This requirement is verified by the third alternative, for polity, oligarchy, democracy are species of Political government, whereas monarchy and aristocracy are species of Royal government.

The more one examines the textual details, the more the rightness—the exclusive rightness—of this third alternative is

corroborated. This fact determines how Aristotle's theory of the kinds of government must be construed. Using the word "form" in our strict sense to signify essentially distinct kinds, there are, for Aristotle, *only two forms of civil government*: the royal and the political. All the kinds enumerated in Books III-IV, being subordinate to these, are merely modes of government, accidental variants of the two basic forms. We shall, therefore, proceed to expound the Aristotelian theory, first, by formulating the basic distinction he makes in Book I and, then, by interpreting Books III-VI in the light thereof, showing why the many subordinate distinctions made therein must be regarded as accidental subdivisions of the two basic forms.²⁹⁵

In the opening chapter of the *Politics*, Aristotle is concerned with the several kinds of community, and especially with the distinction between the family or household and the state.²⁹⁶ They can be distinguished, he says, in size, the larger including the smaller; and also with respect to the end which each association serves. The larger community is also the higher community, for it serves a higher end than do the communities it includes. But these two criteria of distinction, subsequently developed, are not enough, for some people commit the error of

²⁹⁵ It is unfortunate that the method of a mediaeval commentary prevented St. Thomas from making explicit the profound analytical bearing which the basic passages in Book I of the *Politics* have on the remainder of the work. This is not to say that St. Thomas himself did not read the *Politics* in the only way which renders it intelligible and true; but those of his followers who have relied upon his Commentary for their understanding of Aristotle's *Politics* tend to misread it because they fail to look for any connections that St. Thomas himself does not make explicit. The sign of this failure in any writer is his supposition that the classification of the kinds of government made in Books III and IV is the fundamental one. This supposition generally prevails in Scholastic political theory, but, in all fairness, it must be added that it also is prevalent among the many non-Scholastics who completely ignore the crucial passages in Book I, as if they had no relevance whatsoever to the problem of the forms of civil government, and proceed entirely in terms of the classification given in the later books.

²⁹⁶ The first of these is usually called a "domestic community" and the second a "political community," but we shall call the second a "civil community" in order to avoid a double use of the word "political"—as divided against "domestic" with respect to kind of community, and as divided against "royal" with respect to type of regime.

thinking that there is no difference among the regimes to be found in a household or in a state, except in the number of persons ruled. On the contrary, he seems to say, there are four regimes essentially distinct in type: the despotic, the economic, the royal, and the political. In this passage, he does not undertake to describe the difference between the first two, but he does formulate the difference between the last two. "The distinction which is to be made between the royal and the political is as follows: when the government is personal, it is royal (i. e., the ruler is a king); when, according to political principles, the citizens rule and are ruled in turn, it is political."²⁹⁷ St. Thomas's commentary on this passage faithfully expands its meaning. He begins by saying that the civil community, as opposed to the domestic, is ruled by a twofold rule. What he means, of course, is not that the two rules are concurrent, but that they are alternative, for their description shows them to be related as contraries, and hence they must be disjunctive. A regime is royal (*regale*) when the ruler has full or absolute power (*plenariam potestatem*). A regime is political (*politicum*) when the ruler has limited power (*potestatem coarctatam*), i. e., power abridged by certain laws of the state.²⁹⁸

²⁹⁷ *Op. cit.*, I, 1, 1252^a15. The last clause has been given a variant translation: "when, according to political principles, a man is partly ruler and partly ruled he is a statesman"—i. e., not a king, and hence the regime is political, not royal.

The Greek is verbally simpler than any of the usual English translations. The contrast between Royal and Political government is made in terms of whether the ruler is a man *himself* or a man chosen *according to lot*. The very notion of choosing the ruler by lot implies, of course, that the choice is made among a group of equals, any one of whom will do. Political rule, therefore, is proper only in a community of equals. Furthermore, the choice of rulers by lot implies some rotation of men in the various offices of government. Hence it is fair to generalize Aristotle's meaning here, to give it significance beyond the accidental Greek scheme of a lottery: under Constitutional government, men normally pass in and out of office, so that they can be said to rule and be ruled in turn. Finally, the notion of ruling by lot implies that the holder of an office has only an allotment of governmental power, not the whole of it; hence, in so far as others have some share of such power, he is ruled, as well as a ruler. When a man *himself* rules, i. e., *personally*, none of these conditions prevail, but rather their opposites.

²⁹⁸ *In Pol.*, I, i, 3. And in an adjacent passage, St. Thomas goes on to say that when a man presides absolutely and with respect to all things, his rule is royal;

Before we can develop the further implications of this crucial passage, it is necessary to discover what is involved in the distinction between the despotic and the economic type of rule, supposedly proper to the domestic rather than the civil community. A household consists of husband and wife, parents and children, and property or possessions. The elements of property include both inanimate and living things, and the living things are either beasts of burden or natural slaves. Now the economic rule consists in the management of things, and even of beasts, in so far as these are instruments of production or are consumable goods; whereas the despotic rule consists in the mastery of the human beings who, as natural slaves, are instrumentalities of action rather than of production.²⁹⁹ How do these two types of rule—the management of things and the mastery of slaves—differ from the other two governmental relationships within the household? Aristotle's answer is that "a husband and a father rules over wife and children, both free, but the rule differs, the rule over his children being a royal, over his wife a political (or constitutional) rule."³⁰⁰ The essential difference is expressed by the word "free." And the precise meaning of "free" in this connection is that things and slaves are ruled as instruments, i. e., as means to the end of the ruler, whereas those who are ruled for their own good, as ends not as means, are free. It is the end of government, whether for the sake of the governor or for the sake of the governed, which determines whether the governed are free.

It would appear that the parental rule and the conjugal rule do not differ essentially from the royal rule and the political

but when he presides in part according to laws set down by the political discipline, the rule is political—in which case he rules in part, namely, with respect to those things which are under his power, and in part he is subject to rule, i. e., with respect to those things concerning which he is himself regulated by law. St. Thomas would thus seem to favor the second interpretation of the last clause in Aristotle's sentence, as given in fn. 297 *supra*. The two interpretations are quite compatible, however.

²⁹⁹ We are here summarizing the analysis which Aristotle begins in *Politics*, I, 3, and which runs through Chapter 11.

³⁰⁰ *Politics*, I, 12, 1259^b. Cf. *ibid.*, III, 6, 1278^b37-40.

(or constitutional) rule, though the first two are regimes in the domestic, the second two regimes in the civil, community. In fact, the difference between the domestic and the civil community does not seem to enter into the essential determination of any type of rule; for, as Aristotle himself points out, there can be public as well as private slaves, i. e., natural slaves used as instruments by the state instead of by the household.³⁰¹ It makes no difference to the essential nature of mastery and slavery whether the slaves belong *as property* to the domestic or the political economy. Similarly, the management of things (goods of production and consumption) may be accomplished by public corporations formed for such economic purposes, as well as by the household. The fact that the family is a natural economic community, whereas public corporations are conventional associations for economic ends, makes no difference to the character of management.

The essential character of the royal rule, whether it occurs in the domestic or the civil community, lies in the *natural superiority* of the ruler over the ruled. "The rule of a father over his children is royal, for he rules by virtue both of love and of the respect due to age, exercising a kind of royal power. . . . For a king is the natural superior of his subjects, for he should be of the same kin or kind with them, and such is the relation of elder and younger, of father and son."³⁰²

³⁰¹ Vd. *Politics*, VII, 8, esp. 1328^a26-30, 34-37.

³⁰² *Politics*, I, 12, 1259^b10-17. Two points should be observed in this passage, which have a bearing on parts of our analysis to follow. (1) The element of love: the rule of the father being benevolent, i. e., for the good of the children, it elicits the gratitude of love on the part of the ruled. We shall presently consider whether the royal rule in the civil community is always a benevolent regime; and if not, whether it is *properly* royal or a *perversion* of this form of government. (2) The element of consanguinity: in addition to the natural superiority of father to son—"the elder and full-grown being superior to the younger and immature"—there is a blood relationship between them, which generates the responsibility of the father to care for his offspring. But in the civil community must there be this bond between king and subject, as well as the relationship of the naturally superior to the naturally inferior? We shall return to this question presently when we undertake to discuss the historical origins of royal rule in civil communities as a transition

The essential character of the political, or constitutional, rule, whether it occurs in the domestic or the civil community, lies in the *natural equality* of ruler and ruled. "In constitutional government the citizens rule and are ruled by turns, for the idea of constitutional government implies that the natures of the citizens are equal."³⁰³ But in Aristotle's view, there is an *accidental* difference between the conjugal relationship as a case of constitutional government and the political regime as it occurs in the civil community. In the latter case, there is a functional inequality between those who, *at any given time*, occupy ruling offices in the state and those who are merely citizens, capable of holding office but not doing so at the time. In the conjugal situation, however, Aristotle supposes that the male is *permanently*, because by nature, the functional superior of the female. In other words, though husband and wife have natural equality of *status*, they are naturally unequal with respect to *office*, i. e., function.³⁰⁴ We shall not argue here the

from domestic to civil government through the intermediate case of the village community. Vd. fn. 366 and 371 *infra*.

³⁰³ *Politics*, I, 12, 1259^b4-6. Cf. *ibid.*, I, 7, 1255^b20: "Constitutional government is a government of freemen and equals." In contrast, Royal government can be described as a government of freemen and *unequals*.

³⁰⁴ Vd. *Politics*, I, 12, 1259^b9-10: "The relation of the male to the female is of this kind"—i. e., the relation of a ruling officeholder to a ruled citizen—"but here the inequality is permanent." Cf. *Ethics*, VIII, 10: "The association of man and wife seems to be aristocratic; for the man rules in accordance with his worth, and in those matters in which a man should rule, but the matters that befit a woman he hands over to her. If the man rules in everything the relation passes over into oligarchy; for in doing so he is not acting in accordance with their respective worths, and not ruling in virtue of his superiority" (1160^b33-39). In this context, Aristotle also discusses the parental rule: "The association of a father with his sons bears the form of monarchy, since the father cares for his children. . . . It is the ideal of monarchy to be paternal rule" (1160^b24-26). The fact that Aristotle here uses such words as "monarchy," "aristocratic," and "oligarchical," instead of "royal" and "constitutional," must not be interpreted to mean that they are strictly synonymous. As we shall subsequently show, only one type of monarchy—i. e., absolute monarchy—is royal rule; and in one of its meanings "aristocratic" may refer to a royal, in another to a constitutional, form of government. That Aristotle is primarily concerned here with the comparison of the royal and political regimes as these occur in the family and the state is verified by the fact that in

truth or falsity of Aristotle's supposition concerning the natural inequality of men and women.³⁰⁵ Our only point here is that the difference between the constitutional form of government, as it occurs in the conjugal relationship and in the civil community, is accidental to its essential character, just as the presence or absence of consanguinity is accidental to the character of royal government as that occurs in the household and in the state.

Let us now summarize what we have learned about the forms of government. We shall omit from consideration the management of things and animals, and deal only with the government of men, whether these be natural equals or inferiors. There seem to be two principles involved: (1) the condition of natural freedom and natural slavery; (2) the condition of natural equality and natural inequality. But upon closer examination we find that equality and inequality is the primary criterion, from which the other must necessarily be derived. It is the inferiority of both the natural slave and the child which determines that the one shall be mastered (or despotically ruled) and that the other shall be fathered (or royally ruled). There is an important difference, however, between the natural slave and the child. The inferiority of the child is relative to a developmental stage of life—to the child's immaturity, which means simply that the child's nature has not yet been developed by the habits that constitute a mature moral and intellectual character. On the supposition that the child was not born to be a slave, he will grow, under proper training, to be a man, i. e.,

Ethics, VIII, 11, he calls the friendship between parents and children regal, whereas the friendship of man and wife, or that between brothers, is called constitutional.

Cf. St. Thomas, *In Pol.*, I, 10: "The husband rules over the wife according to a political rule, as one chosen ruler is head of the state, but the father rules over his son by a regal rule, and this because the father has full power over his sons as the king over his subjects; but the husband does not have full power over his wife in all things, but only in accordance with the laws of matrimony, as the ruler in a commonwealth has power over the citizens only in accordance with the statutes."

³⁰⁵ This becomes a problem for us in Part V *infra* when we consider the political status of women. We shall deal with it as raising the same general issue as Aristotle's false supposition that there are natural slaves.

a person able to attain the specific natural end of human life. It is this fact which determines how the child shall be ruled: as an inferior in his temporary condition, but as in motion toward that equality of status which is due one who can realize the same end as his rulers. In sharp contrast, the inferiority of the natural slave, whether child or adult, is fixed rather than developmental. He can never attain the specific natural end of man. Therefore, it is proper to rule him, not only as an inferior, but also as a means, for if the ultimate good of the ruled is not the same as the good of the ruler, its essential inferiority makes the good of the ruled a mere means to the ruler's good. Hence whether the governed shall be ruled as a means or as an end depends on the precise character of the latter's inferiority: whether it lies in a fixed limitation of natural power or in a temporary condition of undeveloped nature. It follows, of course, that if the ruled is equal, rather than inferior, to the ruler (both in power and habit), then the governed must be ruled as an end rather than as a means.

This gives three essentially distinct kinds of dominion (or types of regime, or forms of government, for all these phrasings are strictly correlative), of which one is a middle case between two extremes.

(1) At one extreme is the *despotic* regime or the dominion of *servitude*. Here two factors determine the form of government: (a) the inequality in natural power between ruler and ruled which (b) justifies the ruler in using the ruled as a means to his own end.

(2) At the other extreme is the *political* (constitutional) regime or the dominion of *freedom*. Here also two factors determine the form of government: (a) the equality between ruler and ruled both in natural power and in habit, which (b) requires the ruler to serve the ruled as having an end essentially similar to his own (natural happiness) or an end existentially common with his own (the *bonum communitalis* of the civil association).

(3) In between these two extremes is the *royal* regime which

is *another* dominion of *freedom*. Of the two factors here involved, one resembles a factor in the dominion of servitude and the other resembles a factor in the dominion of freedom. The first of these is (a) the inequality in habit, or development of natural power, between ruler and ruled. The second is (b) the requirement, because of the character of this inequality, that the ruler serve the ruled as having an end essentially similar to his own.

The middle case presents certain aspects which must be analyzed. In the first place, it should be observed that there is only a resemblance between, and not an identity of, the (a) factor in the despotic and the royal regime, for there is a difference, as well as a sameness; if this were not so, the difference in mode of treatment of the ruled would not be justified. Similarly, the (a) factor is also different, not exactly the same, in the royal and political regimes, the point of sameness being equality of power, the point of difference being inequality of habit or development.

But, in the second place, the (b) factor seems to be exactly the same in both the royal and political regimes, differing in the same way from the (b) factor in the despotic regime. That is why both can be called dominions of freedom, as opposed to servitude. But though in both cases, the ruled are governed for their own good (as ends) and hence in that condition under government which is called "freedom," the ruled in both cases are not governed in the same way so far as their participation in the government is concerned, or so far as their being able to operate toward the end for which government is instituted. It is, therefore, necessary to distinguish two subordinate modes of the dominion of freedom. If we use the word "regime" to signify the way in which ruling power is exercised (over *free* equals or unequals) we can distinguish between the royal and the political regime. So let us use the word "dominion" to signify the condition of the ruled, not only as to freedom or servitude, but also with respect to their operative participation in the affairs of government, which depends upon their stage of development. Then we must name two modes of freedom

in the governed, and for obvious historical reasons we shall use the word "citizenship" to name the condition of the ruled under a political or constitutional regime, and the word "subjection" to name the condition of the ruled under a royal regime. Thus we have three regimes, each with a strictly correlative mode of dominion: (1) the despotic regime and the dominion of servitude, (2) the royal regime and the dominion of subjection which is freedom, (3) the political or constitutional regime and the dominion of citizenship which is also freedom. We shall subsequently inquire whether the freedom of citizenship and the freedom of subjection are to be understood univocally or analogically.

In the third place, we can now begin to perceive an important difference between the royal regime in the domestic and in the civil community. In the domestic community, the father rules the child primarily for the child's own ultimate good, and only secondarily for the common good of the household of which the child is a member;³⁰⁶ whereas in the civil community, the royal government over subjects is proximately for the sake of the social welfare (the *bonum communitatis*) and only thereafter for the individual happiness of the subjects, i. e., only in so far as the common good itself is a means to their happiness. This fact, as we shall see, is caused by the difference between a child and an adult in the condition of subjection. The former lacks the prudence needed to direct his acts for his own development as well as toward the common good of the domestic community. The latter may possess the prudence needed to direct his private moral acts, yet at the same time lack the prudence required for ordering things to the common good of the civil community. We shall return to this point subsequently.³⁰⁷

³⁰⁶ "The government of children is exercised in the first instance for the good of the governed, or for the common good of both parties, but essentially for the good of the governed" (*Politics*, III, 6, 1279^b37-40).

³⁰⁷ This matter will be treated again in the present Part and also in Part V *infra* when we consider the species of prudence in relation to the several regimes and dominions.

The difference between the constitutional regime in the domestic and the civil

What we have learned is that grades of equality and inequality among men are the source of essential differences among regimes and dominions, and hence of forms of government.³⁰⁸ The basic distinctions are determined (1) by whether the ruled are governed as means or ends, used or served (and this separates the despotic regime from the other two regimes—royal and political; the dominion of servitude from the two dominions of freedom); and (2) by whether those who are ruled as ends are governed as unequal in habit and operation, or as equals (and this separates the royal from the political regime, the free dominion of subjection from the free dominion of citizenship). And, as we have seen, whether the ruled should be governed as ends or means is determined by their equality with their rulers, actually or potentially (i. e., in habit as well as power, or just in power), or by their inequality with their rulers according to a fixed limitation of power which prevents development toward actual equality in habit.³⁰⁹

community, which Aristotle bases on the fixed inequality of male and female, may also be analyzed in terms of a difference in prudence on the part of husband and wife.

These differences are, however, subordinate to the major similarities between the civil and the domestic occurrence of each of these regimes.

³⁰⁸ Just as we shall use the word "regime" to name the way in which ruling power is exercised, and the word "dominion" to name the correlative condition of the ruled, so we shall use "form of government" to name the correlation of a given regime and a given dominion. Thus, Royal government is constituted by a royal regime and a dominion of subjection; Constitutional government is constituted by a political regime and a dominion of citizenship. Both are "free" governments because both of these dominions are conditions of freedom in the ruled.

³⁰⁹ The fundamental terms of psychological analysis are essence, power, habit, and act. The theory of the natural slave is that he is essentially a man, but radically limited in power (which is an accidental or individual difference). This radical limitation of power is to be understood as incapacity to form certain habits, i. e., to acquire certain virtues, and hence to achieve the specific human end con-natural with the perfection of virtue. The (domestic) child and the (civil) subject are deficient in habit rather than power, and while this is also an accidental, or individual, difference, it is a mutable or separable accident, whereas deficiency in power is immutable because consequent upon an individual difference in the nature itself, rather than one due to operation. A difference in habit may be due either to deficiency in power itself as the principle of operation, or it may be due merely to the inoperation of the power at a given stage of development. Further-

Equality and inequality are also the determiners of justice and injustice in human relationships, for justice is treating equals equally and unequals unequally or proportionately, and injustice is treating equals unequally and unequals as if they were equal. This fact requires us to consider whether the three regimes we have distinguished are just, and if so, how many unjust regimes there are and what they are. As defined, the despotic, the royal, and the political regime are all just, for in each case the type of government respects the sort of inequality or the sort of equality which exists between rulers and ruled. And it should be clear at once that, relative to these three just regimes, there are two unjust regimes: (1) the "despotic" rule exercised over men who are radically equal in power, though unequal in habit, which means that these men are unjustly placed in a dominion of servitude; (2) the "royal" rule exercised over men who are radically equal in habit, though unequal in the intensity thereof, which means that these men are unjustly placed in a dominion of subjection.³¹⁰

more, habit as a principle of operation is like power, so that a difference between men in habit entails a difference in their actual operative power at that time. That is why the royal ruler can be said to have more actual power than his subjects, and why the subjects cannot actively participate in their own government, as can citizens who do not differ radically in habit from their constitutional rulers, though even here there may be degrees of intensity in habit which make it proper for some citizens to hold ruling offices and others not. By a "radical difference in habit" we mean the presence or absence of a given habit, whereas a difference in intensity implies radical equality in habit, allowing for the possession of that habit in diverse degrees.

Within the sphere of essential or specific equality, there are then three grades of individual or accidental inequality: (1) radical and immutable inequality in power: the natural slave; (2) radical and mutable inequality in habit, and consequently of operative power: the child or civil subject; (3) radical equality in habit, qualified by inequality in degree or intensity: the citizen. The first two inequalities necessitate the despotic and royal regimes; the third necessitates only the distinction between officeholders and others under constitutional government, for here it is the radical equality in habit which determines the type of regime, and not the subordinate inequality. Difference in intensity of habit may or may not be a mutable accidental difference between two individuals, according as it is due primarily to the individuals' own efforts or to their diverse natural endowments.

³¹⁰ A third sort of injustice is conceivable, namely, the "managerial" rule over natural slaves who, though radically unequal in power, are nevertheless radically

We have quoted the words "despotic" and "royal" because it is the most treacherous sort of ambiguity to use the same word in both a good and a bad sense—to name a just and an unjust regime. The careless tolerance of such ambiguous usage throughout the history of political theory has been the cause of profound confusions in the thought, as well as the language, of those who have tried to analyze the forms of government. We shall, therefore, try to set up an unambiguous vocabulary and make every effort to abide by it in our discourse. We hope the reader will honor the obligation upon him to do likewise.

Historically, the word "tyranny" has been used for the most part as a bad name—the name of an unjust regime. It refers to that sort of rule which unjustly places the ruled in a dominion of servitude. The mastery of natural slaves is not tyranny. Only the mastery of freemen is tyranny. Tyranny is therefore to be defined as that rule which unjustly *uses* for the good of the ruler men whose good should be *served*. It is the injustice of treating ends as means which, by reduction to the basic principle of equality, means the treatment of those who are radically equal in power as if they were radically unequal in this respect.³¹¹

equal in essence with their masters. Men so treated are unjustly degraded to the level of things and beasts. The degradation of a natural slave from the level of personality to that of thinghood is comparable to the degradation of freemen to slavery, or of citizens to subjection.

³¹¹ We are here divorcing the essential meaning of "tyranny" from the purely accidental connotation which derives from its being regarded as the opposite of monarchy. Vd. *Politics*, II, 7, 8. Furthermore, we must criticize Aristotle for allowing himself to use the word "tyranny" as a good rather than a bad name; as, for example, when he speaks of Asiatic governments as tyrannies "because the people are by nature slaves" (*Politics*, III, 14, 1285^a22). If the people are by nature slaves, he should, by the rigor of his own analysis, have used the word "despotic" to name the type of just mastery which should be exercised over them. It is impossible to tyrannize over natural slaves. Furthermore, he is guilty of another loose usage here, for he permits himself to refer to these Asiatic governments as "royalties" but that they cannot be, on his own assumptions, because correlative with royal rule is a dominion of freedom (albeit subjection) and not a dominion of servitude. The essence of tyranny is revealed by a single remark which Aristotle makes in the *Ethics*: "Among the Persians the rule of the father is tyrannical; they use their sons as slaves" (VIII, 10, 1160^b28). Tyranny, in

Although the word "tyranny" has not been free from ambiguity in its many traditional usages, it is not nearly as treacherous as the word "despotism." Aristotle uses this word both as a good name (synonymous with the just mastery of natural slaves) and as a bad name (synonymous with tyranny, or the unjust mastery of freemen).³¹² And in the Roman period, in the later middle ages, as well as throughout modern times, there

short, consists in the mastery of free men, with their consequent degradation to a dominion of servitude. It follows, of course, that if there are no natural slaves, there can be no just mastery, and hence all mastery of men is tyranny, whether it occurs in the household or the state.

³¹² Thus cf. his usage in *Politics*, I, where despotic is opposed to royal and political in terms of type of rule, but not by reference to justice, with his usage in *Politics*, IV, 4-11, where he permits himself to use the word "despotic" as if it were synonymous with "tyrannical." And in *Politics*, III, 6, 1279^a20, Aristotle uses the word "despotic" to refer to that perversion of government in which only the interest of the rulers is served, though in the very next chapter this perversion is called "tyranny" in the special case of a corrupt monarchy—as if "despotism" were the name of a perversion common to tyranny, oligarchy, and democracy. Vd. also *ibid.*, III, 14, 1285^a20-22. Cf. Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, III, 10.

There is a triple ambiguity in Aristotle's use of the word "despotism." (1) It names both a just rule (over natural slaves) and an unjust or perverted regime; (2) in its derogatory sense, it sometimes has greater generality than "tyranny," and (3) it is sometimes identified with "tyranny." These ambiguities can be resolved by noting that in its primary Aristotelian usage—to name the mastery of natural slaves—the connotation of "despotic" has two elements: (a) it is an absolute rule; (b) it is a rule for the good of the ruler. Both of these are just in the case of natural slaves; but only one of these is always unjust in every other case, namely, the second element; whereas the first element (absolute rule) is unjust only in certain cases, where there is equality between ruler and ruled, rather than the sort of inequality which obtains between father and child. Hence we should use one word consistently to name one sort of injustice, and another word to name the other. We propose to use the word "despotic" as a bad name to refer to the cases in which absolute rule is unjust; and the word "tyranny" to name every case in which a rule, absolute or limited, is unjust because for the interest of the ruler. Thus, in so far as a Royal regime is justified, by reason of radical inequality between ruler and ruled, it is not despotic, even though it is absolute. But even when it is not despotic, a Royal rule can become tyrannical, not because it is absolute, but because it is perverted to an unjust end. A Royal regime can become unjustified in its absoluteness, and thus turn into despotism, only when the relationship between ruler and ruled turns from inequality to equality. Thus, in a household, the father is tyrannical when he rules his children for his own good; but he becomes despotic when he tries to rule them as children after they have grown up.

have been many writers who regarded the purely royal regime as intrinsically unjust and used the words "despotic" and "royal" as synonyms to name an unjust subjection of men who should be treated as citizens.³¹³

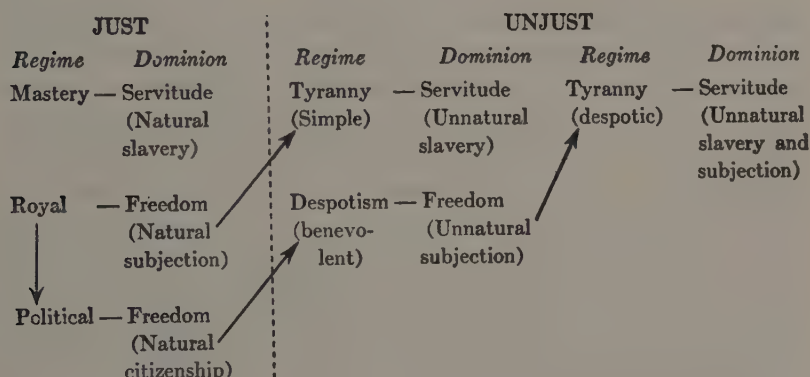
Despite these facts, we shall attempt to use the word "despotic" in a single sense. Since the word "mastery" is available to name the just rule over natural slaves, and since the most widely prevalent use of "despotic" is derogatory, we shall use it to name a type of injustice that is as clearly definable as the injustice of tyranny, and absolutely distinguishable therefrom. As tyranny consists in the degradation of free men to the condition of slaves (ruled as means rather than as ends), so despotism consists in the degradation of equals in freedom to the condition of inequality in freedom (hence ruled as subjects rather than as citizens). Thus we see that if in a given instance royal government is just, it is capable of only one degree of injustice in corruption, namely, by perversion into tyranny; just royal government cannot readily become despotic because it would not have been just in the first place if the ruled were not properly placed in a dominion of subjection.

But constitutional or political government is capable of two degrees of injustice in corruption, first by perversion into des-

³¹³ Republican Rome regarded kings as despots. Vd. Cicero, *De Republica*, I, 27. Ptolemy of Lucca, who completed the *De Regimine Principum* of St. Thomas, tended to identify the royal and the despotic regime. Of him, McIlwain writes: "It is apparent that for him the purely regal and the political are mutually exclusive and that the political form can never be 'despotic' while the regal is sometimes a complete despotism, if not always despotic in some respects, a despotism being a dominion in which the subjects are treated as slaves rather than as citizens. . . . If all the forms of dominion must fall under one or the other of Aristotle's two classes, 'political' and 'despotic,' it is clear that for him regal dominion is invariably despotic" (*The Growth of Political Thought*, pp. 337-38). McIlwain's own error of supposing that all the forms of dominion must be either political or despotic—thus omitting the royal as distinguished from both in Aristotle's account as given in *Politics*, I—indicates how deep and far the confusion runs because of reckless speech. And, as subsequent citations will evidence, many of the political writers of the 17th and 18th centuries—Hooker, Locke, Rousseau, Jefferson—use the words "royal" and "despotic" as if they were interchangeable. Even when they are able to recognize the distinction between despotism and tyranny, they tend to use "royal" and "despotic" with the same connotation of injustice.

potism, and second, by perversion into tyranny. That a despotism need not be a tyranny is seen in the fact that it may be benevolent in intention: though, of course, the intention is always somewhat misguided since the ruler violates the good of the ruled by unjustly subjecting them; nevertheless, with this qualification considered, there remains a distinction between the benevolent and the tyrannical despot, according as the former does not commit the further injustice of using the ruled as a means to his own good.

To give an accurate and verbally clear rendering of the Aristotelian theory of the forms of government, it is necessary to distinguish six regimes, three just and three unjust, and to use six phrasings consistently as their names. Their definitions having already been given, we can now enumerate these in the following diagram, indicating their respective perversions in order.



It will be noted that we have omitted a conceivable perversion of mastery.³¹⁴ It will also be noted that we have omitted one possible sort of regime, namely, the rule of unequals as if they were equal, which might occur in a situation where those incapable of being ruled as citizens participated in constitutional government.³¹⁵ But what is most important to observe

³¹⁴ Vd. fn. 310 *supra*.

³¹⁵ We shall consider this situation in Section 3 *infra*. There we shall see that Aristotle conceives this situation from the opposite point of view, namely, as the

is the fact that the words "servitude" and "freedom"—if taken without their qualifications, indicated parenthetically in the foregoing table—confuse dominions which must be distinguished, for the dominion of servitude may be either just or unjust, and the dominion of freedom may consist in either subjection or citizenship; furthermore, there is one dominion of freedom, correlative with benevolent despotism, which consists in unnatural subjection, and one dominion of servitude, correlative with despotic tyranny, which consists in unnatural slavery as well as unnatural subjection. If there are six distinct regimes, according to the principles of equality and inequality which determine both the essential type of each regime and its justice or injustice, there must be six distinct correlative dominions, for the condition of the ruled varies with the way ruling power is exercised.³¹⁶

injustice done to superior men by degrading them to citizenship or office-holding, when they should exercise a royal rule over their natural inferiors. Vd. fn. 362 *infra*.

³¹⁶ The table of regimes and dominions establishes our basic analytical vocabulary. The six correlative regimes and dominions comprise six forms of government, three just, and three unjust, of which one is the perversion of Royal government, and the other two the ordered perversions of Political government. We are, of course, primarily concerned with only Royal and Political government, because, as we shall subsequently argue, we do not regard mastery as a just regime, since there are no natural slaves.

To connect this basic vocabulary with other terms we have previously used, it is necessary to indicate the synonyms for "Royal" and "Political." Royal government is also called: "absolute rule," "non-constitutional government." Political government is also called: "constitutional government," "limited rule." Furthermore, we shall use the word "kingdom" to name a civil community under Royal rule, and the word "commonwealth" to name a civil community under Political or Constitutional rule. Cf. fn. 289 *supra*.

It must be clear at once that, unless there is no distinction between Royal and Political government, or unless the Royal regime is always and intrinsically unjust (identical with despotism), Father Parsons must be wrong in his contention that there is only one just form of civil government. And it follows, of course, that if there are two just forms which are essentially, not accidentally, distinct, they cannot be equal in their justice, absolutely considered. If they were equal, it would be impossible to distinguish two degrees of injustice in corruption for one of these forms (Political) whereas the other (Royal) has only one degree of corruption. These points will, of course, be argued more fully in what follows.

The diagram shows the difference between simple tyranny and despotic tyranny,

From all that has been said, it should be obvious that a civil community can never be, at one and the same time, both a kingdom and a commonwealth, for where the regime is strictly royal, there can be no citizens, but only subjects, and where the dominion of the ruled is citizenship, the regime must be political or constitutional. In this respect, the civil community seems to differ from the household. In the latter, one and the same ruler may exercise a royal rule (as father) and a political rule (as husband). Why, then, it may be asked, is it impossible for one and the same ruler in a civil community to exercise both sorts of rule over different parts of the population, some of whom will be subjects, other citizens? This question cannot be adequately answered here, especially in view of two facts: (1) that under constitutional government with restricted suffrage, some men are ruled as citizens and others as subjects; and (2) that, in the middle ages, under the paradoxical form of government which was both royal *and* political, the same men were ruled partly as citizens and partly as subjects. Both of these facts being admitted, it still remains true that if the government is purely royal, no men are citizens, and if some of

the former being unjust only with respect to the end which the regime serves, the latter being unjust, *in addition*, with respect to the impropriety of its absoluteness. Cf. fn. 312 *supra*. But tyranny is common to both. Hence it should be obvious at once that the essential meaning of "tyranny" is not derived from one of its accidental modes, namely, the perversion of monarchy. Tyranny is essentially present in any regime in which men are unjustly placed in a condition of servitude; just as despotism is essentially present in any regime in which men are unjustly placed in a condition of subjection. The fact that these two principles of injustice are distinct, separable and cumulatively combinable, proves that there are two principles of justice which are distinct; and because they are separable and cumulatively combinable, one alone can be present in a Royal regime, whereas both together can be present in a Political regime.

One further point. It may be asked whether a Constitutional regime can become tyrannical first, and only subsequently despotic, or whether the motion of corruption always goes from despotism to tyranny. The diagram represents only the latter motion, and omits the former possibility. Yet it is a possibility, which could be represented as a motion from simple tyranny to despotic tyranny in the progressive corruption of constitutional government. We shall consider this and other possibilities in Section 6 *infra* and in Part V to follow.

the ruled are fully citizens, and in no part subjects, the government must be purely constitutional.

These considerations lead us to a passage in Aristotle's *Politics* which is most difficult to interpret and which was interpreted by St. Thomas to conform to the peculiar mediaeval institution of royal and political government. Furthermore, the significance which St. Thomas attributed to this passage has had the unfortunate effect of confusing the theory of regimes which is so clearly indicated by every other capital text to be found in Book I of the *Politics*. We shall, first, interpret the text in Aristotelian terms; then give St. Thomas's interpretation; and finally show how this has resulted in an inadequate analysis of the problem in post-Thomistic thought.

The passage occurs in Chapter 5 of Book I. In a paragraph which begins with the statement "there are many kinds both of rulers and subjects"—thus echoing the point insisted upon in Chapter 1—Aristotle writes: "We may observe in living creatures both a despotical and a political (or constitutional) rule; for the soul rules the body with a despotical rule, whereas the intellect rules the appetites with a constitutional and royal rule." If it were not that this sentence appears to contradict what is said elsewhere, the reader would be justified in passing it by as adding nothing whatsoever to the clearer formulations given in Chapters 1 and 12.³¹⁷ The apparent contradiction is the joining together here of royal and constitutional

³¹⁷ Another reason for not taking this sentence too seriously is that it is metaphorical. As St. Thomas explicitly remarks, there is no justice as between the powers of the soul because "justice properly speaking demands a distinction of *supposita*. Nevertheless, in one and the same man we may speak metaphorically of his various principles of action, such as reason and the appetites, as though they were so many agents; so that metaphorically in one and the same man there is said to be justice in so far as the reason commands the passions and these obey reason" (*Summa Theologica*, II-II, 58, 2). Properly speaking, regimes and dominions relate only *supposita*. It is metaphorical, then, to speak of regimes and dominions among the soul's powers. And the trouble with metaphorical speech is that it is usually indeterminate in meaning: it can be construed in several ways. One can always read into such statements whatever meaning conforms to the theory one holds.

as if they were or could be a single regime, whereas the major insistence in Chapter 1 is that the royal and the political regimes are essentially distinct and opposed.³¹⁸ Now we must either dismiss this statement as an unfortunate slip of speech, or we must try to resolve the apparent contradiction by interpreting it in a way which conforms to the rest of Aristotle's thought on the subject of regimes.

Let us apply Aristotelian principles of interpretation. To support the metaphor of a despotic rule in the soul, we must find one power ruling another entirely as a means or an instrument. This is verified by the control which the reason and will exercise over the locomotive power of the body.³¹⁹ We are, of course, here using the word "despotic" in its good sense, as synonymous with "just mastery over natural slaves." Next, to support the metaphor of a political or constitutional rule in the soul, we must find two powers which are radically equal, differing in function, each of which moves the other in part and is in part moved by the other. This is verified by the causal relationships which exist between the intellect and the will,

³¹⁸ And in Chapter 12 where the regimes in the domestic community are compared with those in the civil community, the same insistence is clear: the paternal rule is radically distinct from the conjugal regime, and the first of these is royal, the second constitutional. Furthermore, this comparison is not metaphorical: 'royal' and 'political' are truly analogical notions as they are applied to the comparable regimes in the household and the state. Hence, there is no question about which of the apparently contradictory texts should be given greater weight. Throughout the rest of the *Politics*, Aristotle's discussion of regimes conforms to the statements made in Chapters 1 and 12, and nowhere again does he link royal and political together. Thus, for example, in Book III, Ch. 17, he writes: "There is by nature both a justice and an advantage appropriate to the rule of a master (i. e., despotic rule), another to kingly (i. e., royal) rule, and another to constitutional (i. e., political) rule" (1287^b38).

³¹⁹ This is what must be meant by "the soul rules the body with a despotic rule." Strictly speaking, the soul as the substantial form of the composite does not rule, even in a metaphorical sense, nor is prime matter (not body)—the other component—ruled in any sense. For "body" then we must substitute "bodily powers" and for "soul" we must substitute "incorporeal powers," namely, reason and will. But the only bodily powers which the reason and will *use* as an instrument are the locomotive powers. Hence, this is what the metaphor must mean, however far-fetched it seems.

which, moreover, are equal in the hierarchy of powers, though perhaps the intellect takes some precedence by nature over the will, as does the husband over the wife in Aristotle's view.³²⁰ Finally, to support the metaphor of a royal rule in the soul, we must find two powers which are not only unequal, but of which one rules the other for the good of that other and because that other cannot rule itself. This is verified by everything we understand concerning the relationship of reason to the passions—the concupiscible and irascible faculties. Furthermore, this is confirmed by a comparison which Aristotle suggests between the way in which the reason disciplines the passions and the way parents govern children, which is typically royal government.³²¹

Hence we conclude that the troublesome sentence can be given an Aristotelian interpretation, but only by separating royal from political as distinct regimes, in the soul metaphorically, as they are in the household and the state actually. This

³²⁰ It is possible to interpret Aristotle's words accordingly, for when he says "the intellect rules the appetites," the word "appetites" here may signify either the sensitive appetite (the passions) or the intellectual appetite (the will). If we take the word in its latter meaning, the notion of constitutional rule is applicable. If we take the word in its former meaning, the notion of royal rule is applicable, as we shall presently show. Hence it becomes true to say that "the intellect rules the *appetites* with a constitutional and a royal rule" if that can be expanded explicitly to mean "the intellect rules the will with a constitutional rule and the passions with a royal rule."

³²¹ Vd. *Ethics*, I, 13, 1102^b30-33. Although this interpretation of the metaphor is consistent with Aristotelian psychology, a study of the Greek text of *Politics*, I, 5, 1254^b2-4 suggests another reading. In the opening clause of the sentence, Aristotle divides despotic against political rule. Now, according to Greek scholars, it is possible to read "political" here as having generic significance, including both "royal" and "constitutional" as equally opposed to "despotic" in meaning. Hence, when in the last clause of the sentence, Aristotle says that "the intellect rules the appetites with a political and royal rule," he may be meaning that reason's rule over the passions is political *only in the sense* that both constitutional and royal are opposed to despotic, but that, under this generic sense, it is strictly royal and not constitutional. This interpretation is, of course, quite consistent with the one we have just given. Both agree in regarding *royal* and *constitutional* as radically opposed; both agree in comparing reason's rule over the passions to a royal regime, and to that only. It is in no way constitutional.

is done by finding three, not two, orderings of the soul's powers: (1) reason and will: locomotive—*despotic*; (2) reason and will: passions—*royal*; (3) reason: will—*political*. With this clearly seen, it is easy to measure the divergence of the Thomistic interpretation. It occurs in the context of psychological analysis rather than in what is primarily political discourse. The whole passage must be quoted. After repeating the sentence from *Politics*, I, 5, St. Thomas writes:

A power is called despotic whereby a man rules his slaves, who have no right to resist in any way the orders of the one that commands them, since they have nothing of their own. But that power is called politic and royal by which a man rules over free subjects, who, though subject to the government of the ruler, have nevertheless something of their own, by reason of which they can resist the orders of him who commands. And so the soul is said to rule the body by a despotic power, because the members of the body cannot in any way resist the sway of the soul, but at the soul's command both hand and foot, and whatever member is naturally moved by voluntary movement, are moved at once. But the intellect or reason is said to rule the irascible and concupiscible by a political power: because the sensitive appetite has something of its own, by virtue of which it can resist the commands of reason.³²²

St. Thomas's interpretation conflicts with the Aristotelian interpretation on one point, and diverges from it on another. The point of conflict is that St. Thomas explicitly insists upon

³²² *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 81, a. 3, ad 2. Cf. *ibid.*, I-II, q. 9, a. 2, ad 3, which is also in the context of psychological discussion. In *De Reg. Princ.*, I, 12, however, St. Thomas compares the rule by reason over the bodily members and over all the powers of the soul, to the rule by God over the universe, or by the king over his kingdom. This unhappy metaphor seems to confuse the royal with the despotic regime, as well as with the political. But there is no difference between the interpretation of Aristotle's metaphorical statement, as given in the *Summa* passage quoted above and as given in St. Thomas's commentary on *Politics*, I, 5. In the *Commentary*, as in the *Summa*, St. Thomas conjoins royal and political as being the way the reason rules the passions; and in both cases his interpretation is made to depend on whether or not the ruled has the power to resist the ruler's commands. This, as we shall see, is a source of some confusion.

It is notable, however, that St. Thomas's interpretation of "soul ruling body" is in terms of the reason's control over the locomotive powers of voluntary movement. Cf. fn. 319 *supra*.

calling reason's control of the passions a political or constitutional rule, which is absolutely impossible if, in Aristotelian terms, a political rule involves equals who rule and are ruled in turn. The point of divergence is that St. Thomas makes the distinction between despotic, on the one hand, and royal and political, on the other, depend on the lack or possession of the *right* (or is it the *power*?) to resist the ruler's commands. By doing this, he correlates the despotic regime with a dominion of servitude on the part of the ruled, and the royal and political regimes with a dominion of freedom on the part of the ruled. But the question is whether the dominion of freedom consists in the *power* to resist or the *right* to resist. Slaves, natural or otherwise, have the power to resist, as the revolt of the Helots in Sparta and all other ancient slave uprisings plainly testify. Moreover, at this point the metaphor breaks down, for the faculty of voluntary movement, in a state of health, does not have even the power to resist reason's commands; yet it is compared to the condition of slavery. Hence we must conclude that the distinction between the dominions of servitude and of freedom turns on the *right* of resistance to government. Obviously even this must be qualified, for there can be a *right* of resistance only against *unjust* government, and then one is impelled to ask whether even the natural slave, since he is supposed to be a man, does not have the *right* to resist unjust mastery, which degrades him below the human level and manages him as if he were a thing. If this be so, as we think it must be, then to say that the slave has no right to resist must mean *no legal right*, no right of the sort which can elicit enforced legal protection against the infringement thereof. Such was in fact the condition of slaves in ancient Greece, though the situation was somewhat altered by Roman law and in the feudal system. But as Aristotle conceived the royal regime, neither did the king's subject, as opposed to the citizen of a constitutional state, have any *legal rights*, whereby to resist the king's unjust commands. That is precisely what is involved in Aristotle's definition of the royal regime as being a personal

rather than a legal rule, as having absolute rather than limited power over the ruled. This lack of legal right or juridical power on the part of the royally ruled was not, in Aristotle's view, incompatible with their condition of freedom, for freedom, as common to both royal subject and constitutional citizen, requires only that the ruled be governed for his own good and the common good, that he be treated as an end rather than as a mere means. This being so, the dominion of freedom must be subdivided into the two distinct conditions of subjection and citizenship, both opposed to servitude, just as the royal and political regimes must be kept distinct though both can be opposed to the despotic.

There seems to be no way of defending St. Thomas's interpretation of the vexatious statement in *Politics*, I, 5. It not only confuses the meanings of "royal" and "political" by supposing that reason's control of the passions can be called both; but, what is worse, it falsely applies the criterion of right to resist which, if it be properly interpreted as a *legal* (i. e., positive) rather than a *natural* right, divides the status of the citizen under constitutional government from the condition of the subject under royal government, as well as from that of the slave.³²³

It may be possible, however, to explain St. Thomas's misreading of Aristotle by reference to the fact that in the middle ages the word "royal" had, for the most part, lost the meaning it had for Aristotle. To some extent, the mediaeval prince was a constitutional ruler. He was not the fully absolute ruler whom Aristotle called a "king." But neither was he *entirely*

³²³ That the ambiguous phrase "right to resist" must be interpreted as a *legal* right is seen in the fact that even the slave has a *natural* right to resist unjust mastery which takes the form of *management*. In terms of a natural right to resist injustice, whether it be management, tyranny, or despotism, *in our sense of these terms*, no distinction whatsoever can be made between the condition of the slave, the subject, and the citizen. The natural right to resist unjust treatment will not distinguish between the dominion of servitude and the dominion of freedom. And certainly power apart from right—i. e., mere physical power—is equally unsatisfactory as a criterion. Mulish animals have the *power* to resist management, even when it is just.

and in every way a purely constitutional ruler, of the sort Aristotle called a "statesman." St. Thomas must be read in the light of his own peculiar mediaeval political experience, and not in terms of Aristotle's.³²⁴ In terms of his own experience, St. Thomas could use the words "royal and political" to designate the very special combination of political institutions which the middle ages achieved, and there would be no contradiction in doing this, so long as the words are properly understood *not to imply* the abrogation of an essential distinction between a purely royal regime, on the one hand, and a purely constitutional regime, on the other. This explanation of St. Thomas's meaning does not, however, remove the two errors we have already pointed out: (1) there is no order of powers in the soul which can support the metaphor of "royal and political"—neither in Aristotle's understanding of these terms as opposed, nor in St. Thomas's understanding of them as conjoined; (2) neither actual power to resist nor the natural right to resist is the criterion for separating the despotic from the royal or political regimes, though the *legal*, not the *natural*, right to resist does separate the political from the royal.³²⁵

³²⁴ We shall return to this complicated problem later, in Section 4 *infra*, when we undertake to determine whether "royal and political government" should be classified as absolute or as limited government, and if as the latter, in what way it is a very special case.

³²⁵ It might be supposed that some true meaning can be given to the notion of a "royal and political" regime in the soul, by pointing out that reason rules the passions *royally* in so far as there is radical inequality between these two orders of power, and that reason can also be said to rule the passions *politically* in so far as the passions have some power of resistance against the commands of reason, regardless of whether such commands are just or unjust. But this is false, as will be seen by anyone who perceives the ambiguity of the word "power" and realizes that it is not merely *physical power* to resist which determines the status of the ruled under constitutional government, but a *legal right* or *juridical power*, which goes no further, of course, than just resistance to unjust commands. Furthermore, a legal right to resist, on the part of the ruled, limits the power of the ruler: it is *potestatem coarctatam*, not *plenariam potestatem*. Furthermore, such limited power in the ruler and such legal right to resist in the ruled is justified only by a condition of radical equality as between ruler and ruled. Hence, given the radical inequality between the rational and sensitive powers, their functional relationship can only support the metaphor of a "royal regime in the powers of

Our reason for making our criticisms so explicit is that among Thomists there has been a tendency to regard St. Thomas's account of regimes and dominions as adequate. They construe his account to consist in a twofold division of regimes (into despotic vs. royal *and* political) and a twofold division of dominions (into servitude vs. freedom). They find support for the second of these divisions in another famous text in the *Treatise on Man*, wherein St. Thomas discusses whether man would have been master over man in a state of innocence, and there distinguishes between mastery over a slave as a mere means, and the government of free men as ends.³²⁶ Furthermore, they regard the two divisions as determined by independent principles, despite the fact that there seems to be a necessary correlation between the despotic regime, as defined in Q. 81, A. 3, ad 2, and the dominion of servitude, as defined in Q. 96, A. 4, and similarly one between the royal and political regime and the dominion of freedom. If there is this necessary correlation, then the Thomistic analysis is inadequate, because it makes a twofold, instead of a threefold, division of both regimes and dominions.

A contemporary writer reveals how the error gets made. As a matter of fact, the error takes the form of making an Aristotelian analysis and attributing it to St. Thomas. In his recent papers on the problem of authority, Professor Yves Simon insists that the distinction between the *regimen despoticum* and the *regimen politicum* must be made in terms of efficient causality (i. e., the power or right of the ruled to resist), whereas the distinction between the dominion of servitude and the dominion of freedom is made in terms of final causality (i. e., whether the ruled is used as a means or served as an end); and he

the soul." Whether in a civil community there is any complex governmental situation which properly deserves to be called a regime *both royal and political*—despite the apparent contrariety of the two basic terms—is a problem we shall return to in Section 4 *infra*. But it is certainly clear now that the Thomistic metaphor is without foundation in fact. Cf. fn. 320 *supra*.

³²⁶ *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 96, a. 4. Cf. *ibid.*, 92, a. 1, ad 2; also *In Sent.*, II, d. 44, q. 1, a. 3.

explicitly says that some erroneously "think that the opposition between the dominion of servitude and the dominion of freedom fully coincides with the opposition between *regimen politicum* and *regimen despoticum*."³²⁷

Now it should be apparent at once that Professor Simon is not following the language or thought of St. Thomas, because the capital text in the *Summa* on regimes (81, 3 ad 2) definitely links the despotic regime with the dominion of servitude. It combines the fact that the slave is ruled as a mere means with the fact that the slave has no right to resist his master's commands. It similarly links the royal and political regime (or regimes) with the dominion (or dominions) of freedom. What has happened is that Professor Simon has dropped the term *royal* out of his analysis and substituted *despotic* for it. The reason for this strange substitution is that Professor Simon does not agree with Aristotle's doctrine of natural slavery (as apparently St. Thomas does to some extent), and since the word "tyranny" names the unjust enslavement of freemen, he has tried to find another use for "despotic" *as a good name in part, rather than as completely bad*. That his use of the word "despotic" is not Aristotelian, any more than it is Thomistic, is

³²⁷ Vd. *Nature and Functions of Authority*, pp. 34-5. Though his words are in the wrong order here, he obviously means to argue against the connection of dominion of servitude with *regimen despoticum* and dominion of freedom with *regimen politicum*. What is most significant here is that Simon omits any reference to *regimen regale* or to *regimen regale et politicum*.

Cf. "Liberty and Authority," in the *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association*, XVI, p. 104, where he writes: "A regimen is said to be despotic when the subjects are not endowed with any power of resistance; it is said to be political when the subjects are *legally endowed* with some power of resisting the orders they receive" or, in other words, the power of the ruler "may either be limited by some power of counter-action or not be limited by any such counter-power." (Italics ours.) Now two things should be noted here: First, Simon here makes clear that by "power to resist" he means *legal power*; this is not made clear in his Marquette lecture. Second, his other way of distinguishing between political and despotic power, according as it is limited by some power of counter-action or not, suggests St. Thomas's phrases "*potestatem coarctatam*" and "*plenariam potestatem*." But this coincides with the distinction between political and royal power, not with the distinction between political and despotic power.

readily shown by his statement that "the classic example of *regimen despoticum* is that of the dominion exercised by the father over his children."³²⁸ But as every relevant passage in Aristotle's *Politics* testifies, the rule exercised by the father over his children is the classic example of the *regimen regale*—and never of the *regimen despoticum*. Hence what Professor Simon has allowed himself to do is to substitute the word "despotic" for the word "royal" in the analysis of regimes. More than that, he has entirely dropped out of his analysis what both Aristotle and St. Thomas understand by a despotic regime—the *just* mastery of natural slaves. And this leads him to a result which corrects the inadequacy in St. Thomas's analysis and returns to the larger truth of Aristotle, even though he violates the language of both in doing so.

That result is the return to the distinction between royal and political regimes, which St. Thomas overlooked entirely. Using the word "despotic" ambiguously (to cover both the mastery of slaves and the royal rule of subjects), Professor Simon points out that the despotic regime is sometimes connected with the dominion of servitude (obviously when it is mastery), and sometimes connected with the dominion of freedom (as in the case of the parental—or royal—government of children).³²⁹ If we resolve his ambiguous usage of "despotic" and employ the word "royal" for that meaning which connects with the dominion of freedom, then we find in Professor Simon's account a right distinction between the royal and the political regime. It involves two elements: (1) the relationship of superiority and inferiority vs. equality between ruler and

³²⁸ *Nature and Functions of Authority*, p. 36. And he goes on to say that "just as the slave, the child is devoid of any power of resisting the orders he receives." He obviously cannot mean *actual power*, for children have a great deal. He must mean *juridical power*, or *legal right*.

³²⁹ It should be noted that he is not able to say that what he means by the political regime is sometimes connected with the dominion of servitude, and sometimes with the dominion of freedom. This shows that when the name of a regime is employed unambiguously, it is unambiguously connected with either one of the two dominions, but not both.

ruled;³³⁰ (2) the lack vs. possession of a positive legal right, on the part of the ruled, to resist government, obviously in so far as it tends to become unjust. Now this second element is equivalent to *plenariam potestatem* (absolute power) vs. *potestatem coarctatam* (limited power) on the part of the ruler. Thus, Professor Simon really distinguishes three regimes and three dominions, though he has only four names, two of which ("despotic" and "freedom") he must use ambiguously. And each one of the three regimes is connected with one and only one of three dominions. This can be briefly shown by the following table, in which Simon's analysis is indicated in one column and an adequate verbal expression of it, avoiding all ambiguities, is given in the other.

<i>Simon</i>	<i>Aristotle</i>
1. The despotic regime which is connected with a dominion of servitude.	1. The just mastery of natural slaves which Aristotle called "despotic."
2. The despotic regime which is connected with a dominion of freedom.	2. The regime which Aristotle called "royal" and the dominion of freedom we have called "subjection."
3. The political regime which is connected with a dominion of freedom.	3. The regime which Aristotle called "political" and the dominion of freedom we have called "citizenship."

Professor Simon's analytical failure is more than an inadequate vocabulary, though that may be its cause. It is a failure to see that there must be a distinct condition on the part of the ruled for every distinct mode in the use of power on the part of the ruler.³³¹ Nevertheless, when his analysis is rectified by a

³³⁰ Though Professor Simon does not place this first element in his definitions he tacitly admits it when he points out that the royal (he calls it "despotic") regime is justified by the political immaturity of the large part of a civil population (*ibid.*, p. 37) and when he calls the parental rule over children "despotic," though clearly he means by "despotic" a just regime and one under which the ruled are free.

³³¹ This leads him to deny what his own analysis should have led him to assert. Of course, if one uses the word "despotic" ambiguously to cover what Aristotle distinguishes as despotic and royal, and if one uses the word "freedom" am-

clarification of ambiguities and by the rigorous observance of its own basic principles, we find Professor Simon concurring with Aristotle, and diverging from St. Thomas, in the matter of royal *vs.* political, as opposed to royal *and* political.³³² Furthermore, this discussion of Professor Simon's views requires us now to look more closely into the relationship between the two

biguously to cover what we have shown must be distinguished as subjection and citizenship, then one is forced to say that it is erroneous to think that the despotic regime is correlative with the dominion of servitude, or that the political regime is correlative with the dominion of freedom.

Furthermore, Professor Simon falsely charges Aristotle with an equivocal use of the word "slavery" when it is his own equivocal use of the word "despotism" which is at fault. Vd. *op. cit.*, p. 35, and fn. 12. Cf. fn. 292 *supra*. The Aristotelian notion of the natural slave always and everywhere involves two elements: (1) use as a mere means, (2) lack of legal right to resist. The trouble, of course, is that the subject of royal rule is defined by the second of these elements, along with the denial of the first; and the citizen of a constitutional state is defined by the denial of both elements. That is why the royal regime can be regarded as a mean between the despotic and the political, or subjection a mean between slavery and citizenship.

Furthermore, it is unfortunate that Professor Simon discarded the word "royal" as the name for a just regime, and used in its place the word "despotic" (in one of its two meanings for him), since this usage neither conforms to the language of Aristotle and St. Thomas, nor to that of modern political theory, in which "despotic" is almost universally used as a bad name, though it is also generally used as a synonym for "royal."

That Professor Simon's language and thought represent a prevalent Thomistic view can be judged from Maritain's approval of it on all the points we have specifically criticized. Vd. his review of *Nature and Functions of Authority*, in *The Review of Politics*, III, 2, pp. 250-54. Maritain says: "He emphasized with perfect accuracy the fact, sometimes disregarded, that the distinction between the *dominion of servitude* and the *dominion of freedom* is in no way equivalent to the distinction between *regimen politicum* and *regimen despoticum*" (p. 253).

³³² It makes no difference to this point that Professor Simon disagrees with both Aristotle and St. Thomas on the matter of natural slavery. Where Aristotle and St. Thomas used the word "despotic" to name the rule which is a just mastery over natural slaves, Professor Simon would have to use the word "tyranny" for any domination of men which places them in a condition of servitude; in which case, he would only enumerate two just regimes—the political and the royal (which he calls "despotic")—but these two he would regard, unlike St. Thomas in the passages cited, as essentially distinct. Whether St. Thomas would also agree to the essential distinction of a purely royal from a purely constitutional regime is difficult to tell, since he never discussed the matter in this way, always dealing with the sort of defective constitutional regime which the middle ages called "royal *and* political."

elements involved in the distinction between royal and political regimes: one, the inequality or equality between ruler and ruled; two, the lack or possession by the ruled of certain legal rights (juridical powers) which either leave the ruling power absolute or limit it. To complete the work of this section we shall now undertake this inquiry, by examining Aristotle's conceptions of constitutionality and citizenship as differentiating the political regime, in which the ruled has legal status and juridical powers, not possessed by the subjects of a king who exercises purely royal (or absolute) rule.³³³

Aristotle uses the word "constitution" in two senses: (1) In a broad or loose sense, it is used to refer to any sort of government whatsoever; in this sense, it is equivalent in meaning to the word "character," for it is the same to ask, what is the constitution of this state? and to ask, what is the character of its political institutions? (2) In a strict and special sense, it is used to refer to one form of government as opposed to another. In this sense, the word "constitutional" is fully equivalent in meaning to "political" and opposed to the meaning of "royal" in the classification of regimes. We are, of course, concerned with constitutionality only in the strict sense.

A constitution is first defined by Aristotle as the arrangement of the magistracies or offices in a civil community.³³⁴ To under-

³³³ If we use Professor Simon's terms, it can be said that there is no difference between the royal and the political regime in terms of final causality, but only in terms of efficient causality. That is another way of saying that both regimes can be just, that they differ, not in the end for which governmental power is used, but rather in the way that power is instituted—with or without limitations, under or above positive law, etc. These are the terms in which we have previously always distinguished between Royal and Republican (or constitutional) government as two *just* forms. Hence it is apparent that Simon and Maritain agree with us against Father Parsons.

³³⁴ *Politics*, III, 6, 1278^b10. He also says that the constitution is identical with the government; and at an earlier point, he says that "a constitution or government is the arrangement of the inhabitants of a state" (*ibid.*, III, 1, 1274^b36). But the context here shows that he does not mean by "inhabitants" all the members of the population, but only the citizens. Hence we must conclude that citizenship is a kind of political office. As we shall see, the special character of the status of citizenship is one of the differentiating marks of constitutional government.

stand this, it is necessary to restrict the notion of an office to a governmental position which is defined by a certain function and to which a certain amount of juridical power is attached as necessary for the performance of that function. Under constitutional government, not all the citizens hold the same office, nor do all citizens occupy governmental offices at any given time. Nevertheless, the notion of offices is not intelligible apart from the conception of citizenship. These are strictly correlative terms. As Aristotle points out, a constitution is an organization of offices which are distributed among the citizens.³³⁵ Let us use the word "status" for citizenship, and the word "office" to designate a governmental, or ruling, function, with appropriate powers. This enables us to understand the proposition that, under constitutional government, the citizens, being equal, rule and are ruled in turn. As citizens, they are ruled; as office-holders, they rule. The equality between rulers and ruled is an equality in status, not in function, for as holding ruling offices and as exercising governmental powers, some of the citizens dominate and regulate the lives of others. But when ruler and ruled are fundamentally *equal in status*, the rulers are superior to the ruled *only by virtue of the office they hold at a given time*. Their superiority is in their offices, not their persons; the juridical power they wield is vested in their offices, not in themselves. The essence of a constitutional regime can, therefore, be defined as government by office-holders, and it is therefore a rule exercised by citizens over citizens, permanently equal in status, but differing at a given time in function.

This account of constitutional government is confirmed by Aristotle's conception of citizenship. Aristotle begins by calling citizenship an "indefinite office."³³⁶ He then adds the notion

³³⁵ *Politics*, IV, 3, 1290^a8. Hence it follows that different subordinate modes of constitutional government will be determined by the criteria (wealth, birth, freedom, etc.) according to which men are admitted to citizenship and are eligible for governmental office.

³³⁶ *Politics*, III, 1, 1275^a31. The meaning of "indefinite" here is "without time limit." Definite offices, in contrast, are those which are held for a time. Aristotle

that anyone "who has the power to take part in the deliberative or judicial administration of a state is said to be a citizen of that state."³³⁷ What is here meant by "power to take part" must be understood in terms of Aristotle's insistence that constitutional government requires the virtue of the ruled to be the same as the virtue of the ruler. In every state, the virtue of the ruled and the virtue of a good man are not the same; but, ideally at least, the essence of constitutional government implies that the good citizen and the good man are identical in virtue.³³⁸ In other words, the citizen is one who

knows how to govern like a freeman and how to obey like a freeman. These are the virtues of a citizen. And although the temperance and the justice of a ruler are distinct from those of a subject, the virtue of a good man will include both; for the virtue of a good man, who is ruled as a free man and an equal, e. g., his justice, will not be one, but will comprise distinct kinds, the one qualifying him to rule and the other to obey.³³⁹

further raises the question whether the citizen should be called a magistrate. If by "magistrate" is meant a definite office, then a citizen is not, as such, a magistrate; but if what is meant is "possessing and exercising some control over the government," then the citizen is a magistrate in the most fundamental sense; in fact, citizenship must then be regarded as the fundamental office in a constitutional state. Cf. fn. 334 *supra*.

St. Thomas, in his commentary, points out that citizenship must be recognized as the primary office in a constitutional state, adding to the criterion of permanency, a further criterion which may not always hold, namely, eligibility for other governmental office. At a later point (in his commentary on Chapter 5), he says that a citizen is one who shares the *honors* of a state, by which he means "shares in, or holds a part of, the sovereignty."

³³⁷ *Politics*, III, 1, 1275^b19-20.

³³⁸ *Politics*, III, 5, 1278^b1-5.

³³⁹ *Politics*, III, 4, 1277^b13-20. In this passage, the case mentioned, in which the temperance and justice of a ruler are distinct from those of a subject, must be understood by reference to the royal, as opposed to the constitutional, regime. In fact, a subject can be defined, in contrast to a citizen, as one who has virtue requisite for obeying, but not sufficient for ruling; hence a subject, unlike a citizen, is one who does not have the power (i. e., the virtue) to take part in the administration of a state.

In his commentary on this chapter, St. Thomas says "he who is absolutely a good citizen knows both how to rule and how to obey well. . . . This is the virtue of the citizen, that he is good in both respects; and both, namely to rule well and to obey well, are proper to an absolutely good man. And thus the virtue of a

This brings us back to the fundamental notion of citizenship as a civil status shared by equals (in power or virtue), but it also explains why a citizen should be eligible to hold a governmental office (a definite office or magistracy) as well as to exercise the rights and duties of his indefinite office. Even when he is not in a definite office, the citizen takes part in judicial or deliberative functions; or, in other words, *he actively participates in his own government to some extent*.³⁴⁰ Equality in *status* gives all who are citizens a certain share in government, though distinction in *offices* gives some of the citizens special governmental functions as rulers.³⁴¹

It remains to see how this fundamental principle of equality in status connects with the other element which enters into the definition of constitutional government, namely, *limited power* (*potestatem coarctatam*) on the part of the rulers (i. e., office-holders) and *legal right* (or power) to resist on the part of the ruled (i. e., citizens). To understand what is here involved, it is necessary to inquire about the meaning of "constitution" in relation to the meaning of "law." In one under-

good citizen is the same virtue which belongs to a good man" but in so far as a man is a subject, rather than a citizen, his virtue is distinct from that of a ruler or a good man. Cf. the concluding remarks of his commentary on Chapter 5.

³⁴⁰ It is not quite precise to identify constitutional government with "self-government" in the extreme sense in which that phrase is sometimes understood, namely, each man his own ruler in every respect. Constitutional government does not abrogate the distinction between some men as rulers and some men as ruled, but by understanding this distinction in terms of the rulers as office-holders and the ruled as citizens, it attributes to the ruled a certain active share in government which is in no way incompatible with the ruled being governed by those who hold office.

³⁴¹ In terms of this conception of citizenship, it is not difficult to see why Aristotle thought that large groups in the population, sailors, artisans, mechanics, etc., as well as natural (domestic) slaves, should be disfranchised. Vd. *Politics*, III, 5: "We cannot consider all those to be citizens who are necessary for the existence of the state. . . . The necessary people are either slaves who minister to the wants of individuals, or mechanics and laborers who are the servants of the community" (1278^a3-14). The problem of the justice of such exclusions from suffrage must be faced not only as an absolute question, but also as a question relative to the economic, cultural, and educational conditions of a given historic community. We shall return to this problem in Part V *infra*.

standing of these terms, the constitution seems to be prior to law. Aristotle says that

the laws are, and ought to be, relative to the constitution, and not the constitution to the laws. . . . Laws are not to be confounded with the principles of the constitution; they are the rules according to which the magistrates should administer the state and proceed against offenders.³⁴²

What is here said about the judicial and executive functions of government can and must be extended to the legislative function. The positive rules of law, applied by judges and enforced by other officers of the state, are made by still other functionaries according to the powers with which legislative bodies (whether a representative assembly or the whole citizenry) are endowed by the constitution. Hence the constitution is prior to the making of laws, as well as to their enforcement, for in determining the offices of government and the status of citizenship, it determines by whom and how laws shall be made, by whom and how they shall be enforced or changed.

But there is another understanding of the word "law" which permits us to regard a constitution as the fundamental positive law of a realm. There can be no question that, in Aristotle's view, a constitution is essentially a *positive* institution—something which men deliberately make and artistically contrive, something which they can voluntarily change as they change other positive laws. And as a positive institution regulative of civil affairs, a constitution is like the rules of law which legislators make and judges administer, even though it must also be regarded as the sort of law which legislators, *as such*, cannot make, for it is the law which makes them what they are and defines their powers. In order to avoid an ambiguity in the word "law" without giving the word up, let us always refer to a constitution as Law, and to those positive rules which are relative to the constitution (i.e., made by legislators, etc.) as laws, or rules of law. Both the Law of a state and its rules of law are *positive* institutions; either may be written enactments,

³⁴² *Politics*, III, 1, 1289^a14-19.

or they may be customary and unwritten.³⁴³ So far the constitution as Law and rules of law are alike. Their basic difference lies not only in the fact that the Law is prior to the laws of a state and determines their character (i.e., their justice according to the constitution which is called their "constitutionality"), but also in the fact that the Law (or constitution) is an enactment of the whole people (i.e., the citizens, of course), or, if not a written enactment, a customary recognition by the whole people, which institutes a certain form of government, whereas the laws thereafter made are only rules enacted, or customs recognized, concerning the conduct of those who live under that government. The constitution (or the Law) creates constitutional government, whereas rules of law are merely expressions of, creatures of, such government.³⁴⁴

This understanding of two distinct grades of positive law is indispensable for understanding the political regime as government by law rather than by men. To follow our usage strictly, we should say that a political regime is a government by Law, whereas a royal regime is a government by Men, for in both constitutional and non-constitutional government, there are rules of law, and men are needed to make them and to administer them. The issue of laws vs. men must be understood on two levels. It is usually supposed that the problem concerns the need for men, in the role of administrators, to supply by equitable judgment in the particular case what is defective in a rule of law because of its generality.³⁴⁵ But the problem has a

³⁴³ Vd. *Politics*, III, 16, 1287^b5-10.

³⁴⁴ It must be remembered throughout this discussion that we are using the word "law" only to refer to positive institutions, whether these be enactments or customs. We are for the moment entirely excluding from consideration "law" in the sense of "natural law"—whether primary or derived. The constitution is neither a principle of *ius naturale* nor a precept of *ius gentium*, though, of course, it may be related to both, these being prior to the Law, or constitution, just as its constitution is prior to the laws of a particular state.

³⁴⁵ "The laws, when just, should be supreme; the magistrate should regulate those matters only on which the laws are unable to speak with precision owing to the difficulty of any general rule embracing all particulars" (*Politics*, III, 11, 1282^b 1-6). Cf. *Ethics*, V, 10. Vd. also *Politics*, III, 16: "Some things can and other

deeper level of significance, on which it touches the very heart of constitutionality. The question is whether Law is supreme in the state, or whether Men are. If the men who govern are merely office-holders, discharging the functions of their offices and exercising the powers attached thereto, then Law is supreme, for it is the constitution which determines what the functions and powers of the various offices (including citizenship) shall be, who shall hold them, and under what circumstances. If, on the contrary, those who govern a civil community rule by virtue of their superior *natures* (not offices), if they and those whom they rule are not equal in status because not equal in virtue or power, then Men are supreme, and strictly speaking there is no Law (i. e., no constitution).

To say that there is no Law in a royal regime does not mean that there are no laws, for the duty and power of the king certainly extends to making positive rules for the government of his subjects. But now a very difficult point of ambiguity arises, namely, whether royal laws are the same as constitutional laws, that is, whether the rules of law instituted by royal government are the same as those instituted by constitutional government. The answer is contained in that most perplexing of all constitutional phrases—"due process of law." To be constitutional, a rule of law has to be made in a certain way, administered in a certain way, and can be changed only in a certain way. But a royal enactment is instituted at the king's will and can be similarly applied or abrogated.³⁴⁶ Rules of law

things cannot be comprehended under laws, and this is the origin of the vexed question whether the best man or the best laws should rule; for matters of detail about which men deliberate cannot be included in legislation" (1287^b19-23). And cf. *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 95, a. 1; q. 96, a. 6, ad 3; q. 97, a. 4.

³⁴⁶ The reader must remember that we are here considering the king as an absolute ruler, i. e., the purely royal regime, and not the mediaeval king who was, in a sense, a constitutional ruler, and whose legislative powers were extremely limited. A "political kingdom" is one in which the king is himself under the Law, not merely under the natural law, but under the positive law—the constitutional principle—by which he holds the office of kingship. To whatever extent the king is an office-holder, he is a king by law and Law, not the king, is supreme. We shall return to the troublesome mediaeval situation in Section 4 *infra*. Here we are considering the real king, the king by nature.

which proceed from the king's will *as the cause of their institution* are, therefore, like administrative decrees, even though they have a quasi-generality and permanence. The rules of law which obtain in a royal and in a constitutional government cannot be called "laws" in a univocal use of that word.

As bearing on the fundamental distinction between royal and political regimes, the familiar opposition of "laws vs. men" must, therefore, be understood as follows. In a royal regime, there is no Law (i. e., no constitution); hence Men who rule by *natural* superiority are supreme in government; furthermore, the rules they institute are like administrative decrees rather than like the positive enactments or customary provisions which, in a constitutional state, are made by due process of Law (i. e., conform to constitutional principles of law-making). In a political regime, Law is supreme; the men who rule by *official* superiority are under this Law, even though they have constitutional power to make rules of law and to administer these rules; office-holders do not have the power to make or change the Law under which they hold office and function governmentally. Constitutions may differ in the character and extent of the sanctions they provide for enforcing the supremacy of Law over the men in every office of government, but the essential point remains the same.³⁴⁷

The traditional question, "whether a government by laws or a government by men is better," really reduces to the question, whether constitutional government is better than non-constitutional, whether the political is better than the royal regime. The question is badly misinterpreted, if it be supposed that the alternatives are a government without laws or a government without men as rulers. The alternatives really are: either a government without Law, in which Men are supreme and govern by decrees that are something like rules of law; or a

³⁴⁷ We shall later compare ancient and mediaeval with modern constitutional governments on this matter of sanctions whereby the supremacy of Law is peacefully maintained. It touches the meaning of the maxim "*princeps legibus solutus est*" as that was applied to Roman emperors and mediaeval kings. Vd. Section 4 *infra*.

government under Law, in which men are needed to perform the functions, not only of law-making, but also of administration, because rules of law are defective in their generality and need equitable application or dispensation in particular cases, and because many things cannot be regulated by legal rules at all, but require executive power issuing administrative decrees.³⁴⁸

The significance and truth of this analysis is confirmed by Aristotle's discussion of the stages of corruption which constitutional regimes can undergo. The point here is not that democracy and oligarchy are less just than polity and aristocracy as constitutional governments, but that both democracy and oligarchy can themselves undergo corruption by ceasing to be constitutional governments.³⁴⁹ Translated into our analytical vocabulary, which is much less ambiguous than Aristotle's, the point is that democracy becomes Lawless when "the authority of every office is undermined. Such a democracy is fairly open to the objection that it is not constitutional government at all, for where the Law has no authority, there is no constitution. The Law ought to be supreme over all, and the magistrates

³⁴⁸ Only when the question is so understood, does Aristotle's discussion of "law vs. men" have a significant bearing on the question whether royal or political government is better. Vd. esp. *Politics*, III, 15, 16. It is here that Aristotle so sharply distinguishes between royal or absolute government and constitutional or limited monarchy, of which he says: "The so-called limited monarchy, or kingship *according to law*, is not a distinct form of government" (1287^a4). Italics ours. There can be no doubt about what he means: limited monarchy is merely an *accidental* mode of constitutional government; only absolute monarchy, which is government by men not under Law, is the royal regime, i. e., a form of government *essentially* distinct from political or constitutional government.

³⁴⁹ The extraordinary significance of this point cannot be fully expounded here; but even a superficial understanding of it will show how sharply it contradicts the "traditional" notion that Aristotle supposed there were three good states and three bad states, and that these were the "forms of government." The fact that democracy and oligarchy can be less just types of constitutional government is not only thoroughly compatible with the fact that each of these subordinate types can be *essentially* corrupted by becoming non-constitutional regimes, but also requires us to see that Aristotle's whole analysis depends on the recognition of the primacy of an essential distinction between forms of government (Royal and Political regimes), subordinate to which there are subordinate distinctions, such as democracy, oligarchy, and polity, within the sphere of constitutional government.

should judge of particulars, and only this should be considered constitutional government. So that if democracy be considered a kind of really constitutional government, the sort of system in which all things are regulated by decrees is clearly not even a democracy.”³⁵⁰ There is similarly a mode of oligarchy “in which the magistrates are supreme and not the law. Among oligarchies this is what tyranny is in relation to royal government, and the corruption of democracy in relation to its constitutional form.”³⁵¹ Thus we see that the supremacy of Law not only determines the distinction of the political from the royal regime, but also separates two stages in the corruption of political regimes: they can first become Lawless by abolishing the constitution, and this is the primary revolution which turns such governments into despotisms; secondly, such despotisms will usually be tyrannical rather than benevolent, but they need not become so. This demonstrates the independence of two principles of good government: (1) that it be for the common

³⁵⁰ *Politics*, IV, 4, 1292^a29-37. And he also says that “this sort of democracy is, relative to the true forms of democracy, what tyranny is to monarchy” (1292^b18). This means that as *simple* tyranny is the corruption of royal government, so *despotic* tyranny is the ultimate corruption of constitutional government. Cf. fn. 316 *supra*. In *simple* tyranny, there is only one step of corruption, for the king, like the tyrant, rules by decrees, and the difference between them is whether the rule is for the sake of the common good or not. But in *despotic* tyranny, there are two steps of corruption: under the leadership of demagogues, a faction of the people rule (a) by decrees and (b) for their own good, not the common good. The substitution of rule by decree for government under Law is the corruption of constitutional government into despotism which, then, usually declines further into tyranny, according as the Lawless government unjustly *uses* some of the ruled for the good of those in power. The fact that there is rule by decree, and government by men rather than by Law, in both a royal regime and in a corrupt democracy does not make them the same, for in the former case, there is a *natural* superiority in those who rule for the common good, whereas in the latter case, some men, who are equal or even inferior to others in virtue, make themselves supreme over these others, and rule them, not as office-holders, but as men with usurped power. This is the injustice we call “despotism.”

³⁵¹ *Politics*, IV, 5, 1292^b9-11. The interpretation of this passage must be made in a manner similar to our interpretation of the preceding one. Vd. fn. 350 *supra*. The sort of oligarchy which ceases to be constitutional government, through becoming Lawless, is both despotic and tyrannical, and so *resembles* the corruption of royal government which is simple tyranny.

good, whether or not it is Lawful; (2) that, in addition to being for the common good, it be Lawful.³⁵²

The principle of the supremacy of Law enables us to grasp the meaning of limited as opposed to absolute government. A constitution, as the supreme Law, limits the powers of the men who rule as office-holders in three ways: (1) there is usually a division of offices, each of which holds only part of the total sovereignty, i. e., governmental authority and power; (2) there is always some authority and power left resident in the fundamental office which Aristotle called the "indefinite office" and we have called the "status" of citizenship—it is there potentially even when it is not actually exercised; and (3) to be *legally* binding on the ruled (i. e., the citizens), the power of office-holders must be exercised according to due processes of law, which means that office-holders cease to have the constitutional authority of rulers (i. e., officials) when they violate the constitution which is supreme over them, and under which they govern. Thus we see that, in limiting the juridical power of officials, a constitution endows the citizens with a *legal* right (and hence juridical power) to resist commands which are unconstitutional. And, in so far as a constitution embodies principles of natural law, it gives the citizens a *legal* right to resist commands which violate the natural law.

Now, of course, actual power is not the same as juridical

³⁵² A royal regime, as just, is a *personal* government (by supreme men) for the common good. A political regime, as just, is a constitutional government (by men under supreme Law) for the common good.

The separability and cumulative combinability of two elements of justice is thus again shown. Cf. fn. 312 *supra*. As government can be perverted in two distinct ways—(a) by being contrary to the common good and (b) by being Lawless—so government can be good in two distinct ways—(a) by being for the common good and (b) by being Lawful. If Aristotle had more explicitly distinguished between these two types of perversion and, moreover, had consistently used the words "tyranny" and "despotism" to name each of them in distinction from the other, the history of political theory might have been saved from the many confusions and errors into which it has fallen. It would not have been supposed that the only criterion for distinguishing between good and bad governments was *simply* whether it was for or against the common good; nor would it have been supposed that all good government is constitutional.

power. Unless legal rights are protected by enforceable sanctions, the citizens' legal right of resistance may be transgressed by the actual, if not the juridical, power of officials who take the law into their own hands and violate the constitution. This is the beginning of rebellion on *their* part and may have to be met by violence and force, if legal and peaceful means of redress against such miscreants are not available. We shall return to this problem of adequate sanctions to protect constitutional government in our subsequent consideration of mediaeval and modern political experience.³⁵³ It is here that the greatest advances have been made in modern times, a fact which often leads to the mistaken notion that constitutional government is a peculiarly modern invention. However important the means are in the practical order, they do not define the end they serve; and so, whether or not the same enforceable sanctions are available, and whether or not, if different, they are equally adequate as means, the essence of constitutional government remains the same in ancient, mediaeval, and modern embodiments. *It is that form of government which is just for a community of equals; in which rulers and ruled have the same fundamental status (i.e., citizenship); in which the rulers have only the functional superiority of office; in which the ruled participate actively in the government; and in which, under the supremacy of Law, the officials have limited juridical power and the citizens have legal rights whereby they can resist unconstitutional transgressions on the part of those in power.*

This completes our initial discussion of the principle of constitutionality in government. Since this principle defines the nature of a political regime, it also necessarily defines, by contrariety, the nature of a royal regime. A royal regime is that form of government which is just for a community in which radical inequality exists between one man or a few and the rest. Here the ruled are not equal in virtue to their rulers, having only the virtue necessary for obedience, but not for ruling. It is this fact which makes rulers and ruled fundamentally un-

³⁵³ Vd. Section 4 *infra*. Cf. fn. 347 *supra*.

equal in status. In consequence, superiority of status is sufficient to justify the exercise of ruling power; or, in other words, rulership is founded upon a superiority of nature rather than on a superiority of official function over those equal in status.³⁵⁴ This is what Aristotle means by calling government by a king a "personal rule." It is personal in the sense that it is vested in the ruler's personal (i. e., natural) superiority over his subjects. Because of their inferiority in nature (hence also in virtue and status), the subjects of such rule do not and should not actively participate in government. Royal government, as just, is *for* them, but not *of* them or *by* them. Finally, in such government, some men must be supreme (i. e., not under any *positive* law); and if the rulers are above Law, it follows that the ruled will be beneath Law, which is another way of saying that they will not be able to stand *on* the Law against their rulers, even if the latter depart from the natural law which is over all men. This means that in a royal regime the rulers have absolute power (*plenariam potestatem*); in consequence, the subjects must be totally devoid of legal rights in defense, or juridical powers of redress, against injustice on the part of an absolute ruler tending toward tyranny.³⁵⁵

³⁵⁴ Where ruler and ruled are equal in status, the ruler has only the functional superiority of the office he holds, even though he may also have acquired superiority in habit (in the intensity thereof) which entitles him, rather than another, to hold that office. Vd. fn. 309 *supra*. But where ruler and ruled are unequal in status—justifiably so because the ruler is superior by reason of habits which the ruled do not possess at all—there the ruler exercises the functional superiority not of an office, but of his person or nature. The word "nature" here, of course, signifies not original nature, but modified nature due to habituation.

³⁵⁵ So far as absolute power is concerned, there is no difference between the ruler who is just (a king) and one who is unjust (a tyrant). The difference lies in the benevolence with which the king exercises his absolute power for the good of his subjects. Vd. St. Thomas's commentary on the *Politics*, I, 12.

Father Parsons quotes Manegold of Lautenbach as saying that "the name *king* is not the name of a nature but of an office, just as bishop, priest, and deacon" and he goes on to say himself that the "latter lose their offices when they are false to the terms of their appointment; and so does a king when he turns into a tyrant" (*Review of Politics*, IV, 2, p. 136). Obviously he must be thinking of the mediaeval king who was, in a sense, an office-holder; he is not thinking of the truly royal ruler—the king by nature rather than by Law. Cf. *Politics*, III, 14, where Aristotle

But it may be observed that though we have defined the royal and the political regimes (the kingdom and the commonwealth) as essentially distinct and as exclusively opposed to one another, we have, nevertheless, in each case said the regime was just, or at least *could be* in a certain type of community, depending on conditions of equality or inequality in the population. Hence it may be objected that we have not shown what must be proved: that one of these regimes is *more just* than another. We now turn to the consideration of this question.

3. Though we shall begin here to argue the case for the greater justice of the political regime, we cannot complete the argument in a single step. It is necessary to separate the question about the justice which each of two regimes may have *relative* to diverse circumstances, from the question about which is the *more just absolutely*.³⁵⁶ And in order to understand why

identifies the pure form of royal regime: "There is a fifth type of kingly rule in which one has the disposal of all, just as in a commonwealth, the government has the disposal of public matters. This type corresponds to the control of a household. For as household management is the royal rule of a domestic community, so royal rule is the household management of a political community" (1285^b30-34). Cf. *ibid.*, 1285^b15-30 wherein Aristotle distinguishes between kings according to law and the despotic kings who rule over Asiatic barbarians. Here the word "despotic" does not have the connotation of injustice, but rather of absolute power.

Cf. Dr. Ashley's point that the head of a family rules "by nature both as to the dominion itself and the person who holds it" (*The Theory of Natural Slavery*, Notre Dame, 1941: p. 117). In contrast, in a truly political regime, though some rulership itself is natural, in so far as government is a natural and necessary means to the common good, its occupancy by individual persons is a matter of positive institution. That is why the royal rule over a civil community is like a household rule, for the absolute prince rules "by nature both as to the dominion itself and the person who holds it." Ashley properly distinguishes between the royal and the political regimes, and argues against the identification of the royal with the despotic, on the one hand, or of the despotic with the tyrannical, on the other. Furthermore, he points out that "those who are ruled regally" are "ruled absolutely or without any share in the decisions," whereas "those who are ruled politically" are "ruled with a share in the deliberations" (*ibid.*, p. 131). This is another way of saying that subjects do not actively participate in their own government; citizens do.

³⁵⁶ Vd. *Politics*, IV, 1. Cf. *ibid.*, IV, 11, wherein Aristotle again distinguishes between the best absolutely and what may be good relatively. "If we are judging absolutely and not relatively to given conditions, then that form of government

the political regime is more just absolutely, it is first necessary to determine the type of circumstances which *justify* a royal regime relatively, and to compare them with the type of circumstances which *justify* a political regime relatively. In this section, we shall concern ourselves primarily with the first step in this argument—the *relative justification of a royal regime*.

The relative merits of royal and constitutional government is the chief problem of Plato's great dialogue, the *Politicus*.³⁵⁷ The argument turns on the question whether it is better for a community to be ruled by Law, or by a man "who shows a strength of art which is superior to law." And the conclusion seems to be, as McIlwain summarizes it, that "the ideally best rule exists where the ruler is not limited by law but makes *his art a law*."³⁵⁸ McIlwain uses the word "despotism" to name such an absolute rule, without or above Law, but clearly means by such benevolent despotism (i. e., absolute rule for the common good) what we have called "royal government." And the question is whether Plato is "insisting on the superiority of despotism over constitutionalism as a principle of practical politics, or trying to illustrate the very opposite. . . . Does Plato believe in the actual or possible existence of any ruler with such 'strength of art' that his 'art' should be the only law of the state? He evidently believes that such a philosopher-king ought to rule as a despot if you could only find him. But does he believe that such an incomparable embodiment of omniscience, omnicompetence, and utter benevolence could possibly exist except in the imagination?"³⁵⁹

which is nearest to the best is better and that which is furthest from it is worst. I say 'relatively to given conditions' since, though a particular form may be better absolutely, another form may be better for some people" (1296^b7). Aristotle does not tell us here what the absolute standard is, but he certainly implies that it is the best form of government which measures the goodness of all others, and furthermore that what is best absolutely cannot be measured by relativity to given conditions.

³⁵⁷ According to Professor Jaeger it is this dialogue, rather than the *Republic*, which represents the major influence of Plato on Aristotle's political thought: vd. *Aristotle*, Oxford, 1934: p. 290.

³⁵⁸ *Constitutionalism, Ancient and Modern*, p. 34.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

It is McIlwain's judgment that Plato regarded "absolute government as the only celestial one, and celestial government as the only one properly absolute."³⁰⁰ Royal government is ideal, but not earthly. The best *practicable* government for actual human communities is constitutional. If this be Plato's view, it is inadequate for two reasons. In the first place, it wrongly conceives the political ideal as the totally impracticable; in the practical science of politics, the ideal of government should be defined in terms of men *as they are or can be*. In the second place, Plato does not seem to have any conception of the royal rule as good on earth under real conditions. The real problem is not whether constitutional government is second-best to an impracticable ideal of absolute government, but whether royal government, as quite practicable under certain circumstances, is second-best to constitutional government on earth.

This is the problem which Aristotle answers. Aristotle follows Plato in so far as, in the *Politics*, he seems to take the position that "a godlike ruler should rule like a god, and if a godlike man should appear among men, godlike rule would and should be gladly conceded to him."³⁰¹ But though Aristotle does permit himself to indulge in such conjectures about what should be done in a Greek city if a godlike man were to appear, this is not his own approach to the question, but a vestige of

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 35. "A divine competence in a ruler is in fact the only real justification of a despotism. . . . It is interesting but not strange to find Cardinal Bellarmine in the sixteenth century arguing that the Church should have a despotic government because the Church is divine, while the state ought to have a limited government because the state is human" (pp. 34-35). Vd. Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, II, 7; III, 6.

³⁰¹ McIlwain, *op. cit.*, p. 35. It is worth noting that McIlwain, in commenting on Plato's theory of constitutional government, says "it is of little consequence that there should be one ruler, or a few or many rulers, in such a state, provided the government be limited by law" (p. 35). This is, of course, equally true of Aristotle's theory, though McIlwain and most of the other great scholars in the field seem to suppose that the number of *officeholders* is a principle of essential distinction within the sphere of constitutional government, according to Aristotle. This, as we shall subsequently show, is completely and patently false. Vd. Section 5 *infra*.

his youthful Platonism.³⁶² The characteristically Aristotelian justification of absolute government is realistic to the core. It seeks to rest its case on the facts of history and what might be called "comparative sociology."

Let us consider the possibilities as Aristotle viewed them.

³⁶² "A citizen is one who shares in governing and being governed. . . . He is one who is able and willing to be governed and to govern with a view to the life of virtue. If, however, there be some one person, or more than one, although not enough to make up the full complement of the state, whose virtue is so pre-eminent that the virtues or political capacity of all the rest admit of no comparison with his or theirs, he or they can no longer be regarded as a part of a commonwealth; for justice will not be done to the superior, if he is reckoned only as the equal of those who are so far inferior to him in virtue or political capacity. Such a one may truly be deemed a god among men. Hence we see that legislation is necessarily concerned only with those who are equal in birth and in capacity; and that for men of pre-eminent virtue there is no law—they are themselves a law. . . . And for this reason democratic states have instituted ostracism." Aristotle's point here can be truly generalized for all modes of constitutional government, for all, not merely what he understood to be the democratic mode, are based on equality. The commonwealth, i. e., constitutional government, as opposed to a kingdom, is "a community of equals" (*Politics*, VII, 8, 1328^a). He goes on: "The argument in favor of ostracism is based on a kind of political justice. . . . Mankind will not say that such a one is to be expelled and exiled; on the other hand, he ought not to be a citizen—that would be as if mankind should claim to rule over Zeus, dividing his offices among them. The only alternative (i. e., to ostracism of the godlike man by a constitutional state) is that all should joyfully obey such a ruler, according to what seems to be the order of nature, and that men like him should be kings in their communities for life" (*Politics*, III, 13, 1284^a-1284^b34).

And in Chapter 17 of Book III, he returns to the matter again. "Where men are alike and equal, it is neither expedient nor just that one man should be lord over all, whether there are laws, or whether there are no laws, but he himself is in the place of law. Neither should a good man be lord over good men, nor a bad man over bad; nor even if he excels in virtue should he have the right to rule absolutely, except in the special case at which I have already hinted (in Chapter 13 as indicated), and to which I now recur. . . . A people who produce some men superior in the virtue needed for government are fitted for kingly government. . . . When a whole family, or some individual, happens to be so pre-eminent in virtue as to surpass all others, then it is just that they should be the royal family and supreme over all, or that this one individual should be king of the whole nation. . . . For surely it would not be right to kill, or ostracize, or exile such a person, or require that he should accept the status of a citizen and take his turn in being governed. . . . But if so, the only alternative is that he should have the supreme (and absolute) power, and that mankind should obey him, not in turn but always" (*Politics*, III, 17, 1288^a1-30).

Since the royal regime is just only on the condition of a radical inequality in virtue or power between ruler and ruled, there are obviously two sets of circumstances which can satisfy this condition. Using as a standard of measurement the grade of intelligence and virtue which Aristotle regarded as the requirement for citizenship in a Greek commonwealth, the two possibilities are: (1) that one man or a few may be found who are radically superior to the average Greek citizen; (2) that whole peoples or races may be found who are radically inferior to the average Greek citizen. To follow Aristotle's imagery, let us call the man who would be superior to the Greek citizen a "godlike man"; and let us call the races or peoples who would be inferior to a Greek citizen "barbarians," which is, after all, the Greek equivalent of our modern reference to uncultivated and uncivilized peoples. Now in either of these two cases a royal regime would be justified, for if a godlike man could be found among the Greeks, it would be unjust to degrade him to the level of citizenship; and if a man who would only be on a plane of equality with Greek citizens dwells among the barbarians, he should be their king.

Of these two possibilities, Aristotle regards the first as presenting only a hypothetical problem. Should it occur, this is what justice *would* require; but no *actual* royal regimes or absolute governments exemplify this hypothesis. If Plato regarded the notion of a philosopher-king as a pure hypothesis—a way of comparing heavenly with earthly government—how much more so did Aristotle dismiss the notion as totally unfounded in any known realities.³⁶³ But the second possibility is not purely hypothetical. Absolute governments have actually existed on earth, among Greeks in the historic past, and among the barbarians in the present.^{363a} Not only have they existed,

³⁶³ Aristotle's consideration of the hypothesis must be read as the dialectical exploration of a possibility, not as a description of any situation within the political experience of men. Vd. fn. 362 *supra*. Cf. also fn. 357 *supra*.

^{363a} Vd. Hippocrates, *Works* (trans. by F. Adams), Baltimore, 1939: pp. 34-35, ¶16. Hippocrates discusses the physique and character of the Asiatics in relation to their sufferance of despotism.

but they can be justified by the very circumstances which comprise the second possibility. The justification lies not in the superiority of a godlike man, but rather in the superiority of one or a few ordinary men over a population which is defective in political capacities or virtues.³⁶⁴ Royal rule, in short, is just under primitive conditions. By "primitive conditions" is meant a low level of culture and civilization in the mass of men to be governed. But, it may be asked, how does royal government arise under such conditions? Aristotle's account of the transition from the domestic to the civil community answers this question.

The village community is the crucial step in this transition. The family is the association established by nature for the supply of man's everyday wants. . . . But when several families are united, and the association aims at something more than the supply of daily needs, the first society to be formed is the village. And the

³⁶⁴ We shall not be concerned here with the question whether such defect is an incurable limitation of nature, or whether it is merely due to lack of cultivation, economic obstacles, etc. The fact that a people is, for the most part, uncultivated and uncivilized does not mean that their human natures are incapable of cultivation or civilization. We shall return to this point later, esp. in Part V *infra*, when we discuss the transition from Republican to Democratic government. But however it be explained, the fact that a people is, at a given time, uncivilized, uncultivated, etc., is the fact which justifies their being governed as subjects by an absolute ruler who need not be a godlike man to be superior to them, but need only be as civilized as an ordinary Greek citizen. The same man who is entitled to be a king among the barbarians would be justly treated as a citizen in a Greek commonwealth.

Cf. Yves Simon, *Nature and Functions of Authority*: "If the members of a society have not yet reached a sufficient degree of political maturity, so as to deserve a statutory regime"—i.e., a Constitutional regime—"it does not follow necessarily that they are to be exploited for the private profit of their leaders. Thus the dominion of servitude cannot be justified by the principles which justify . . . the non-statutory regime" (p. 37)—i.e., the Royal regime. Vd. also "Liberty and Authority" *loc. cit.*, p. 111: "Nothing prevents, at least *de jure*, that people be despotically governed for their own good or for the common good, that is, not as slaves, but as free men. It may well occur that a despotic regime be needed for the protection of a liberty that is not yet sufficiently strengthened against the forces of evil." Here Simon uses the word "despotic" in a good sense to name the just absolute regime in a civil community, which we have called "royal."

the most natural form of the village appears to be that of a colony from the family. . . . *This is the reason why Hellenistic states were originally governed by kings; because the Hellenes were under royal rule before they formed states, even as the barbarians still are.*³⁶⁵

Aristotle's point here is that the Hellenes lived in villages, or what we would call "small tribal communities," before they formed states, and the tribal regime tends to be royal, because it carries that form of government over from the family. "Every family is ruled by the eldest, and therefore in the colonies of the family (i.e., tribes or villages), the royal form of government prevailed."³⁶⁶

This does not mean that the early kings forcibly subjugated

³⁶⁵ *Politics*, I, 2, 1252^b12-21. Italics ours.

³⁶⁶ *Politics*, I, 2, 1252^b22-23. In other words, the rule of the father over his own children is a royal rule; and when through colonization the family enlarges into a tribe or village, comprising many families bound together by consanguinity, the rule of the father naturally becomes the rule of the elders, or of the eldest, and this continues to be a royal regime. So gradual is this natural transition that even after a larger community is formed out of the association of villages, i.e., the state or civil community, the tendency toward a royal regime still persists. That is why the Hellenes remained under royal government for some time after they had passed from tribal communities to cities. Cf. fn. 302 *supra*.

What has just been said has a bearing on one of the most perplexing remarks in the *Politics*: "he who first founded the state was the greatest of benefactors" (I, 2, 1253^a30). Does this mean "he who first formed a *civil community* out of unrelated villages" or does it mean "he who first instituted the political regime of a city to take the place of the more primitive royal government"? If it means the latter, then Aristotle is praising the man (or men) responsible for what, in his eyes, was the greatest political revolution in the direction of progress—the formation of constitutional government (strictly, the *constitution of a state*) to supplant a kingdom. The second alternative, moreover, would imply that Aristotle conceived a constitution as something which first came into being as the result of invention and by conventional institution. Although he would have thoroughly rejected the notion of a social contract among men to form societies *as such*, it is not antithetical to his views in general to regard the state as a work of conventional arrangement—in so far as it comes into full being only when *constituted*, i.e., only when a constitution has been voluntarily developed. Cf. H. D. Lewis, "The Original Contract" in *Ethics*, 50, 2, pp. 193-205. Cf. Parsons, "The Mediaeval Theory of the Tyrant," *loc. cit.*, p. 136, fn. 33. Vd. also W. F. Oberling, *The Philosophy of Law of James Wilson*, Washington, 1939: Ch. 6 and 8; and Carlyle, *Political Liberty*, pp. 47, 55, 107, 136, 159, 180.

the people they ruled. On the contrary, when the situation justifies royal rule, the subjects will voluntarily acquiesce in it. "The kingly rule of heroic times," says Aristotle, "was exercised over willing subjects. For the first chiefs were benefactors to the people in arts or arms; they either gathered them into a community or procured land for them."³⁶⁷ Furthermore, in

³⁶⁷ *Politics*, III, 14, 1285^b4-6. This confirms the insight that the kingly rule is related to the enlargement of the community from a village to something like a city. Whether the subjects of a king are *willing* or not is, however, as accidental to the essence of the royal regime as whether or not the kingship is elective or hereditary. If they recognize the superiority of the man who should be king, and if they are grateful for his benevolence and benefactions, they should, of course, voluntarily accept subjection to his absolute rule; but even if they did not realize what was good for them, the situation would remain unchanged so far as the justification of a royal regime is concerned.

Aristotle does, however, seem to distinguish between the kingly rule of heroic times and the kingly rule which corresponds to the government of a household. Vd. *Politics*, III, 14, 1285^b21 and 1285^b30-33. But this is inconsistent with his account of the persistence of kingship among the Hellenes as a hold-over from family and village communities. In fact, this chapter on the kinds of royalty is full of apparent inconsistencies due to the way Aristotle uses the word "despotism" here to name the absolute power wielded by a barbarian monarch, which was often exercised in a tyrannical and arbitrary manner, rather than justly and benevolently. It is necessary always to separate the *absoluteness* of ruling power from the tyrannical or benevolent exercise thereof. In terms of the essential criterion—namely, absolute as opposed to limited power—all of the kinds of kingship Aristotle enumerates fall into two groups: (1) constitutional or limited monarchies which, therefore, "are not a distinct form of government," as is said plainly in Chapter 16; (2) absolute monarchies in which the ruler, not Law, is supreme, and which, therefore, can be properly described as "the household rule of a city," for the essential characteristic common to the paternal rule over children and the kingly rule over subjects is their absoluteness. It is only the kingly rule in the second sense which can be regarded as a distinct form of government, which, along with paternal rule, deserves the name of "royal regime." The fact that the governments of the barbarians are usually a corruption of the royal regime into tyranny, or what Aristotle miscalls "despotism," is an historical accident which does not alter the situation. Where a royal regime is justified by the circumstances, as in the case of the barbarians, its justification is independent of how the absolute power of the ruler is exercised—whether benevolently, as Aristotle seems to think was the case with the early Greek kings, or tyrannically, as Aristotle seems to think usually happens when royal power is in the hands of the Asiatic overlords. Tyranny is never justified by any circumstances whatsoever; hence the only problem of justification concerns the distinction between the king and the statesman, not the king and the tyrant.

ancient times, "when cities were small and men of eminent virtue few," it was natural for the first governments to be king-ships.³⁶⁸ It was equally natural for a change to occur as the civil community enlarged, with a consequent spread of civilization among men who had gained some leisure both for the cultivation of the arts and for participation in civic affairs.³⁶⁹ Therefore, it happened that, "when many persons equal in merit arose, no longer enduring the pre-eminence of one, they desired to have a commonwealth and set up a constitution."³⁷⁰ As the developmental transition from household and village to the most primitive civil communities explains the extension of royal rule from pre-civil communities to the state, so the gradual enlargement and development of the state, slowly exercising a civilizing influence upon more and more men, explains the historic fact of the transition from royal to constitutional government—the revolution which turned kingdoms into commonwealths.³⁷¹ Such revolutions were for Aristotle a thing of the

³⁶⁸ *Politics*, III, 15, 1286^b9-10. These men "were made kings because they were benefactors, and benefits can only be bestowed by good men" (*ibid.*, 1286^b10-11).

³⁶⁹ Precisely because it is a larger community than village or household, and through its size makes possible a greater division of labor, the state is able to serve for some men the end of the good life, and not merely subsistence. "When several villages are united in a single complete community, large enough to be nearly or quite self-sufficing, the state comes into existence, originating in the bare needs of life, and continuing in existence for the sake of the good life" (*Politics*, I, 2, 1252^b 27-30).

³⁷⁰ *Politics*, III, 15, 1286^b12-13. Cf. fn. 366 *supra*.

³⁷¹ Three points should be observed here. (1) The extension of the royal rule from the domestic to the civil community, through the village as an intermediate stage, consists in the preservation of the same fundamental pattern of government—of the less mature by the more mature, whether maturity be measured in years, in experience, or in virtue.

(2) Although it is analytically true that the essential notion of the royal regime applies equally to the parental government of children in a household and to the absolute government of subjects in a kingdom, it is not, from a genetic point of view, indifferent whether one calls the parental rule "the kingly government of a household" or calls the kingly rule "the household government of a city." Genetically, the royal regime originates in the domestic community and extends therefrom to the village and the state. Hence, genetically, the royal regime is primarily a domestic form of government, or at most one which is appropriate to a village, and when it occurs in a state, its anomalous character should be indicated by referring

past. "Royalties do not now come into existence; where such forms of government now arise, they are either constitutional monarchies or tyrannies. For the rule of a king is over voluntary subjects, and he is supreme in all matters; but in our own day men are more upon an equality, and no one is so immeasurably superior to others as to represent adequately the greatness and dignity of the royal position. Hence mankind will not, if they can help it, endure absolute rule, and anyone who obtains such power by force or fraud is at once thought to be a tyrant."⁸⁷²

to it as "the household or village rule of a state." When we say that the royal regime of a civil community is *anomalous*, we do not mean that it cannot be justified in the primitive stages of civil life, but rather that when the potentialities of the state are fully developed, as they are by advanced and highly civilized communities, then the royal regime is improper and unjustified. In other words, if a royal regime persisted forever in civil communities, it would bar the way to the political progress which civil life makes possible because it works upon more and more men as a civilizing influence.

Just as the village is a transition stage between the household and the state, so the kingdom is a transition stage, in the progress of political affairs, between the village and the commonwealth. Since the nature of a thing is to be understood in terms of the fullest actualization of its potentialities, the state is by its very nature intended to be a commonwealth formed by constitutional government. Hence a civil community which is a state *materially* in terms of its greater size than a village, and is at the same time a kingdom, rather than a commonwealth, *formally*, is an anomaly which can only be understood historically as a stage of political progress. By taking this historical view of absolute kingdoms, we not only understand the justification of royal rule as relative to primitive civic conditions, but also begin to see why constitutional is *absolutely* better than royal government. If it were not more just, absolutely speaking, then the historical facts we have reviewed do not present a picture of political progress, and we have wrongly understood the nature of the state as being in potency or tendency toward a perfecting fulfillment in constitutional government. We shall return to this thesis in Section 6 *infra*, where we shall complete the proof of the absolute superiority of the political over the royal regime.

(3) A third point is suggested by the second above. Viewed genetically, is the political regime primarily and properly a form of civil government, or is it equally proper to the household in the conjugal relationship? On this the evidence is far from clear. However the question be answered, the name of the regime—"political"—certainly suggests that it is the sort of government which is proper to a *polis*, a city or state. It is not merely a play on words to say that a *polis* should also be a *polity*, i. e., what is a state *materially* should *formally* (in form of government) be constitutional (political).

⁸⁷² *Politics*, V, 10, 1313^a3-10.

This last point is highly significant as suggesting the regressive direction of the revolution from constitutional government to an absolute regime. In the heroic past, when conditions became ripe for the change, the shift from royal to constitutional government was epoch-making progress. But in the civilized Greek communities, of which Aristotle had a contemporary's knowledge, the shift from constitutional government to any mode of absolute rule was not only retrogressive, but it marked a corruption of government, and such despotism could only be interpreted as a step toward the ultimate perversion which is tyranny. The man or men who overthrew the constitution and seized absolute power were not likely to have benevolent intentions. Even if they did try to serve the common good, their regime would be essentially blemished by the injustice of despotism—which is the injustice of an absolute rule exercised over equals. Usually, of course, such despotism was merely a means to accomplish the exactions of tyranny. Those who seized absolute power did not stop at subjugating the people; they enslaved them.³⁷³ That is why, among people who are politically mature, the very name of “king” tends to have the connotation of both despotism and tyranny. For them, a royal regime either means something proper to a primitive community, or else it suggests the corruption of constitutional government in the direction of despotism and tyranny. As Aristotle points out, the institution of kingship is permitted to endure in advanced communities only when it is radically and essentially modified—becoming the element of monarchy in a constitutional regime.³⁷⁴

³⁷³ “Such tyranny is that arbitrary power of an individual who is responsible to no one, and governs all alike, whether equals or betters, with a view to his own advantage, not to that of his subjects, and therefore against their will. No freeman, if he can escape from it, will endure such a government” (*Politics*, IV, 10, 1295^a 19-23).

³⁷⁴ Using the word “royalty” as ambiguously covering both absolute and limited monarchy, Aristotle writes: “Royalty is preserved by the limitations of its powers. The more restricted the functions of kings, the longer their power will last unimpaired” (*Politics*, V, 11, 1313^a19-21). This point has a bearing on the history of the institution of kingship in the middle ages, and is also relevant to the regressive

Thus we get from Aristotle a picture of the dynamics of political change—both progressive and corruptive—in which political advance is marked by an alteration in the circumstances which justify royal government to conditions which demand, as a matter of justice, the formation of a constitutional regime; and in which political decline is backward along this road, but now from constitutional government to despotism and tyranny, the latter never justifiable, but the former no longer justified because the circumstances which once made an absolute regime just no longer obtain.³⁷⁵

Few political theorists after Aristotle have ever approached the problem of the forms of government, and their comparative merits, in terms of so profound an understanding of political dynamism. Few of them have even thought of the superiority of the constitutional over the royal regime in terms of political progress and the altered conditions of civil life which demand, in justice, that such progress take place. Few have understood the distinction between the royal regime as a stage in progress toward constitutional government and despotism as a stage in the corruption of constitutional government. This is revealed by the prevalent use of the word "despotism" to name any absolute regime whether, according to primitive or civilized circumstances, it is or is not justified. Cicero recognized that the royal rule is equivalent to a paternal rule;³⁷⁶ he saw that the subjects of such absolute power were in a condition some-

political revolution which tried, in the 16th and 17th centuries, to restore kingship to its absolute powers, resulting ultimately in the contrary progressive step toward the abolition of kingship entirely. Vd. Section 4 *infra*, where we shall deal with the conception of kingship in mediaeval constitutionalism, and with the modern conflict between the principles of absolute and limited government.

³⁷⁵ Vd. the diagram (p. 477) *supra* in which these diverse motions are schematically represented. The simple perversion of a royal regime (which is justified by primitive conditions and which is just so long as it is benevolent) into a tyranny (which is not unjust because it is absolute government, but unjust because it is a misuse of such power) is not a decline in the same sense as the corruption of a constitutional regime first into despotism and then into despotic tyranny. It is not a decline because it does not represent the contrary motion to an advance in political affairs.

³⁷⁶ Vd. *De Republica*, I, 35.

where between slavery and citizenship;³⁷⁷ he even told the history of the development of Roman affairs from the early kingship through the tyranny of the Tarquins to the foundation of the republic;³⁷⁸ but though he rejoiced in this career of progress, he did not apply its lessons to an account of the forms of government, for he nowhere faced the problem of the relative justification of the royal regime, and the absolute superiority in justice of constitutional government. St. Thomas's own political theory is almost totally devoid of the basic dynamic insights, despite his commentary on the *Politics*, despite his consideration of the transition from royal to constitutional government in Roman history,³⁷⁹ and despite his apparent emphasis on the requirement that a just ruler concern himself, not merely with maintaining the common good, but with promoting its greater perfection.³⁸⁰ Despite all these things, St. Thomas not only seems to deal with the problem of the forms of government statically rather than dynamically, but also *appears* to take the position which Father Parsons regards as "traditional"—namely, that governments are divided into just and unjust, and that among the just types, one may be more *expedient* than another relative to certain circumstances, but one is not more just than another, either relatively or absolutely.³⁸¹ On such a theory of the forms of government, political progress is either inconceivable or must be dismissed as trivial, as occurring only in accidental matters—the achievement of greater efficiency, but not the realization of greater justice. In this respect St. Thomas was a child of his age. The general outlook of the middle ages was profoundly unhistorical,

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, I, 27. To be ruled by a king, or even as subjects of the Roman state, is "to some extent like slavery for a people." *Vd. ibid.*, I, 31. Cf. Carlyle, *Mediaeval Political Theory in the West*, pp. 447-48. Cf. also fn. 331 *supra*.

³⁷⁸ *Vd. ibid.*, I, 37-45.

³⁷⁹ *Vd. De Reg. Princ.*, I, 4.

³⁸⁰ *Vd. ibid.*, I, 15. Cf. our discussion of this point in Part II *supra*, *loc. cit.*, at pp. 621-24. There is, however, one passage in the *Summa* (I-II, 97, 3 ad 3) which has great relevance to the comparison of the justice in royal and political regimes. We shall comment on this passage in Section 4 *infra*.

³⁸¹ *Vd. fn. 283 and 295 supra*.

not because it lacked knowledge of the past, but because it tended to flatten out the future as an unchanging continuation of the present.

Because its theory of the forms of government is dominated by a dynamic point of view, and because it conceives the best form *absolutely* as the term of progress and other forms as good *relative* to inferior circumstances, John Stuart Mill's great *Essay on Representative Government* stands alone in the history of political thought as continuing the work which Aristotle's *Politics* began. Across the span of centuries and the chasm of differences between the 4th century Greek aristocrat and the 19th century liberal, there is an affinity all the more remarkable because of the disagreements between Aristotle and Mill on such matters as slavery and suffrage, women and war. If the central problem of political theory concerns the forms of government, there can be no question that Mill is profoundly Aristotelian and, to our knowledge, he is almost unique in this respect. Other modern thinkers, facing the issue between absolute and limited government, have resolved the issue too simply: they have either, like Hobbes and Bodin, argued for the exclusive rightness of absolutism, or, like Locke, Rousseau, and Jefferson, they have regarded constitutional government as the *only* just form, identifying the royal regime with despotism as *absolutely* unjust.³⁸² But even though Mill follows the modern custom of using the word "despotism" to name absolute government, he differs from all these others in that for him despotism is neither absolutely just nor absolutely unjust, but just *relative* to primitive conditions of civil life, and therefore *less* just than a constitutional regime or what he calls "representative government," because only the latter is just *relative* to highly civilized communities. He explains the *inexpediency*, not the injustice, of constitutional government for primitive communities; in

³⁸² In this respect, the Jesuit opponents of King James—Suarez and Bellarmine, as well as Victoria—do not differ from other modern proponents of constitutionalism. They, too, insist that *only* constitutional government is just, and that an absolute regime is *absolutely* unjust. This is the position which Father Parsons is still defending.

contrast, he argues that absolute government is not merely inexpedient for civilized men, but that it is unjust. In short, he not only shows how each of the two basic regimes (the essential distinction between which he clearly recognizes) is just *relative* to certain circumstances, but he also shows why one of these is, *absolutely speaking*, more just than the other.³⁸³

The full statement of this last insight is necessary to complete

³⁸³ Vd. *op. cit.*, esp. Chapter 2, "The Criterion of a Good Form of Government," Chapter 3, "That the Ideally Best Form of Government is Representative Government," Chapter 4, "Under What Social Conditions Representative Government is Inapplicable," and Chapter 18, "Of the Government of Dependencies by a Free State." It is difficult to restrain the impulse to quote at length from these chapters which not only expound with consummate clarity and eloquence a part of the political theory we regard as true, namely, the hierarchy of forms of government, but also richly illustrate its main theses with an impressive array of evidence drawn from the records of actual political experience.

The profound affinity between Mill and Aristotle lies in their insight that political theory must be dynamic, that the several good forms of government must be viewed as stages in political progress, that the less good form is just relative to inferior conditions and that the better form, inexpedient under such conditions, is required by justice when superior conditions are reached in the course of social development. Moreover, they both understand why the form which is just relative to superior conditions is the more just form when the several regimes are compared absolutely. But above all they both affirm the same essential distinction between absolute and limited regimes, defining these two forms in the same way; they regard this distinction as the *only* basic or essential distinction among forms of government, regarding all other divisions as nothing but subordinate classifications of accidental modes of each.

On all these points, and especially the last, Mill is a better exponent of Aristotle's theory than Aristotle himself because he expounds the theory with unmistakable explicitness, whereas Aristotle indicates it, often only by implication, in a few passages which *appear* to be nullified by many that are contrary. No one could read Mill's *Essay* and miss these points. But Aristotle's *Politics* can be read—as, in fact, it has been by its commentators and by great scholars—without discovering that the book contains a doctrine radically different from the "traditional" one which has been drawn from it. The passages we have quoted throughout our foregoing discussion are, we maintain, the crucial texts which determine how all the rest of the *Politics* must be interpreted. Failure to give these preëminence, failure to read the rest of the book in their light, makes the *Politics* at best a mess of inconsistencies.

We shall return to a fuller discussion of Mill's *Essay* in Part V to follow, where we shall consider the step of progress from the Republican to the Democratic form of constitutional government.

our argument concerning the two forms of government which we have been considering. We shall undertake its demonstration (in Section 6) after we have dealt (in Section 4) with the problems peculiar to mediaeval governments which seem to be *both royal and political*, and after we have examined (in Section 5) the subordinate accidental modes of these two regimes in their purity, or separation from one another.

In concluding this section, it is necessary to add a word of caution. The argument concerning a *relative justification* of the royal regime (by reference to what we have called primitive social conditions) depends on judgments of fact about the level of civilization in historic communities of the remote past or even in contemporary ones. It depends on difficult casuistical judgments about the equality or inequality of men, in order to certify the claim that one or a few men are radically superior in habit or virtue to the many others, for unless this claim is factually verified, the principle which justifies absolute rule cannot be applied in a particular case.

The allegations of fact on which both Aristotle and Mill rest their case are certainly open to question. Such judgments, by their very nature, can never be indisputable; and it may even be said that there is contrary evidence. Hence Aristotle *may* be wrong in supposing that primitive Greek communities, or the Asiatic ones he called "barbaric," involved the sort of radical inequality which truly justified Royal government. Mill's similar supposition about peoples whose political inferiority properly places them in subjection to a non-constitutional rule by their betters, *may* be equally false in fact. The factual truth, on the contrary, *may* be that in every civil society which has ever existed, there has been sufficient equality in habit among all normal adults to make anything less than Constitutional government unjust. One might even go further and allege the facts about human equality to be *always* such that not even Republican government (with substantial limitations on suffrage), but only Democracy, can be justified relative to existing circumstances.

Philosophical analysis must fit the facts whatever they are. The analytical truth of political theory does not depend, however, on the solution of the sort of issue about historic facts which we here face. Facing such an issue, our task is to understand the consequences, should one or the other supposition about the facts be true. If the facts are as Aristotle and Mill suppose them to be, then Royal rule has in fact been justified under certain historic circumstances, past or present. On the contrary supposition, Royal rule has never been justified historically, and, being absolute, has always been despotic, even though in some cases it may also have been benevolent (i. e., just, in the sense of serving the common good) rather than tyrannical. But on either supposition about the facts, Constitutional government remains more just *absolutely* than Royal government, and the Democratic form of Constitutional government more just than the Republican form, and hence most just.

The analytical consequences of the two suppositions differ primarily with respect to the inferior regimes—the ones which are less than completely just, as well as the several perversions of good government. On the Aristotelian supposition, the inferior good regimes are regarded as absolutely less just, not because they involve any actual injustice, but because such justice as they actually exhibit is relative to inferior conditions, and so one or more elements of justice remain in potentiality until the development of better conditions demands their actualization. On the contrary supposition, the two inferior good regimes (i. e., Republican and Royal) are regarded as absolutely less just because they combine some actual injustice (violations, not privations, of justice) along with one or more elements of actual justice. Accordingly, the best form of government absolutely must be the form which is completely just (i. e., involving no actual injustice); the other good forms would be inferior because they are actually both just and unjust; and the whole account of the corruptions of good government would be altered in consequence.

Since this issue of fact will be relevant to our argument con-

cerning the superiority of Democratic to Republican government (and the relative justification of the latter by reference to inferior conditions), we think it advisable to postpone our consideration of all its analytical consequences until the end of Part V. This issue of fact cannot there be avoided because of the problems we shall have to consider in Part V—the problem of slavery and the problem of restricted vs. universal suffrage. But in this Part, we can continue to work out our analysis on the supposition about historic fact which Aristotle and Mill both make. No error will be engendered, nor any unfounded conclusion lightly accepted, so long as the reader is repeatedly cautioned that the *relative justification* of inferior good regimes is based on an hypothesis about historic fact which may not be readily verifiable and which may, upon closer examination, turn out to be false. In any case—whether this hypothesis or its opposite is true—our analysis has already shown, and will in its further developments even more plainly prove, *that there are several forms of government, each of which has some justice, but not in the same degree, each being more or less just than another; and that there are several distinct perversions of good government which are not equally unjust.*

This has been denied by Father Parsons, and so the establishment of this truth is by itself sufficient refutation of the “traditional” theory which he and others still espouse. Regardless of how the issue about the *relative justification* of inferior regimes is ultimately resolved, this truth enables us to demonstrate that Democracy is the most just form of government.

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(*To be continued.*)

BOOK REVIEWS

The Crisis of Our Age. By PITIRIM A. SOROKIN. New York: Dutton & Co., 1941. Pp. 338, with index. \$3.50.

Dr. Sorokin, Professor of Sociology and Chairman of the Division of Sociology at Harvard University, gives us in this book a summary of his views on the world crisis and the remedies, good and bad, that have been advanced for the restoration of social order. Famed as the author of the invaluable *Contemporary Sociological Theories* and the monumental study of society in four volumes, *Social and Cultural Dynamics*, Dr. Sorokin seeks to ward off the current pessimism initiated by Spengler in *The Decline of the West* by an impassioned yet scholarly appeal to intelligent observers of society on behalf of his cyclical theory of social change. Because of the condensed nature of *The Crisis of Our Age* and because of the importance of its cardinal thesis, it has been thought opportune, in this review, to give a rather detailed outline of the thesis, that the reader of the review might himself make such criticisms as the brevity of space will not permit the reviewer to include.

In the first chapter, entitled "The Diagnosis of the Crisis," the author considers three diagnoses of the contemporary social scene. The first is represented by those who think that it is an ordinary crisis, similar to many through which Western society has passed several times in every century. The second diagnosis represents the crisis as the death agony of Western society and culture. The former verdict is to be rejected because it does not sufficiently comprehend the range of the maladjustment that faces society. It is not a mere question of economic or political adjustment: "it consists in a disintegration of a fundamental form of Western culture and society dominant for the last four centuries" (p. 17). The author's proof of this contention consists in the exemplification of his culture theory. To his mind there is in every civilization some value which is the major premise and foundation for all the institutions, mores, and thought of the age. In the medieval culture, this value was represented by a supersensory and superrational God as the only true reality; and this value may be called ideational. Opposed to this is the sensate value, which emerged with the decline of the medieval culture at the end of the twelfth century, a principle which proclaimed that the true reality and value is sensory. From the blending of this sensate principle with the declining ideational principle came an essentially new form of culture in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; its major premise was that the true reality is partly supersensory and partly sensory. This cultural system is called *idealistic*: "it embraces the supersensory and superrational aspect, plus the rational aspect, and finally the sensory aspect, all blended into one unity, that of the infinite

manifold, God" (p. 20). With the dissolution of medieval society, the sensate principle became more firmly entrenched, and in the sixteenth century became dominant. It is this sensate culture which has held sway over Western civilization for the past four centuries, and the crisis that we witness today consists in the disintegration of the dominant sensate system of modern Euro-American culture. Since the sensate form has impressed itself on all the main compartments of Western culture, the disintegration will not be limited merely to the economic or political sectors, but will pervade the whole social structure.

This means that the main issue of our times is not democracy versus totalitarianism, not liberty versus despotism; neither is it capitalism versus communism, nor pacifism versus militarism, nor internationalism versus nationalism, nor any of the current popular issues. . . . All these popular issues are but small side issues—mere by-products of the main issue, namely, the sensate form of culture and way of life versus another, different form (p. 22).

Having duly disposed of the first diagnosis, the author proceeds to disavow the theory of the death agony of Western society. He denies the application of the biological process to cultural change, and labels the theories of Spengler and others as mere analogies, consisting of undefined terms, of nonexistent uniformities, of undemonstrated claims.

The complete disintegration of our culture and society, claimed by the pessimists, is impossible, also, for the reason that the *total sum* of social and cultural phenomena of Western society and culture has never been integrated into one unified system. What has not been integrated cannot, it is evident, disintegrate (p. 26).

With this, Dr. Sorokin passes to the consideration of the third diagnosis as developed by himself.

It declares that the present trouble represents the disintegration of the sensate form of Western culture and society, which emerged at the end of the twelfth century and gradually replaced the declining ideational form of medieval culture. . . . In the period of its ascendancy and climax it created the most magnificent cultural values in most of the compartments of Western culture. . . . However, no finite form, either ideational or sensate, is eternal. Sooner or later, it is bound to exhaust its creative abilities. . . . So it has happened several times before . . . and so it is happening now with our sensate form, which has apparently entered its decadent stage (pp. 28-29).

The unfolding and substantiation of the meaning of this diagnosis is the purpose of the remainder of the book.

Passing to an analysis of the crises in various fields of social and cultural life, Dr. Sorokin considers in the second chapter, "The Crisis of the Fine Arts," one of the most sensitive mirrors of society and culture. He first treats of the ideational, idealistic, and sensate forms of the fine arts and

then passes on to the notable shifts in these artistic forms. The topic of ideational art is the supersensory kingdom of God; its style is and must be symbolic; it is static in its character and in its adherence to the sanctified, hierarchic forms of tradition. With sensate art, on the other hand, the topic is the empirical world of the senses; its style is naturalistic, visual, even illusionistic, free from any supersensory symbolism; its character is dynamic, eternally changing, presenting a constant succession of fads and fashions. Idealistic art, as an intermediary between the ideational and sensate forms, has as its topic a world partly supersensory, and partly sensory in the sublimest and noblest aspects of sensory reality; its style is partly symbolic and allegoric, partly realistic and naturalistic; though progressive, its tone is serene, calm and imperturbable. Having adduced historical examples of each of these forms, Dr. Sorokin concludes that "the preeminence of each form of the fine arts is not a question of the presence or absence of artistic skill but of the nature of the dominant supersystem of culture" (p. 36). His study of the shifts in the forms of art in Western civilization shows that the fine arts passed from the ideational form in the medieval period to the idealistic form of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and then the sensate form came into its own, having dominance from the sixteenth century on, and reaching its climax and possible limit in the nineteenth century. With the aid of statistical and historical data, the author traces these changes in portraiture, architecture, sculpture, painting, drama and the theater, literature, and music. The concluding section of this chapter treats of the contemporary crisis in the Western fine arts. Dr. Sorokin lauds the achievements of our sensate art: its technical skill, its unexampled volume and size, its infinite diversity and variety, and its inner value. Still, the maladies of our sensate art are numerous: its inclination to sensualism, the tendency to become more and more superficial in its reflection and re-creation of the sensory world itself, the morbid concentration of sensate art on pathological types of persons and events, a growing incoherence and disintegration resulting from its diversity, an increasing subordination of quality to quantity, of inner content and genius to means and techniques and, as a result of this, an unholy professionalism and specialization. To the author's mind, these symptoms are so unequivocal that they constitute a veritable *memento mori* foreshadowing the extinction of contemporary sensate art. "After the travail and chaos of the transition period, a new art—probably ideational—will perpetuate in a new guise the perennial creative *élan* of human culture" (p. 79).

Chapter Three, "The Crisis in the System of Truth, Science, Philosophy, and Religion," examines, as its title suggests, other areas of society and culture. Dr. Sorokin first considers the three systems of truth: ideational, idealistic, and sensate. Ideational truth is the truth revealed by the grace

of God; sensate truth is the truth of the senses; and idealistic truth is a synthesis of both made by our reason. Each dominates its respective culture and society. Considerable time is spent in delineating the characteristics of the sensate system of truth and knowledge. It implies a denial of, or an utterly indifferent attitude toward, any supersensory reality or value; it most strongly favors the study of the sensory world, with its physical, chemical, and biological properties and relationships; it discredits, to a certain extent, reason and logic as the sources of truth until their deductions are corroborated by the testimony of the sense organs; it is inevitably materialistic; sensory utility and pleasure become the sole criteria of what is good and bad; its mentality is temporalistic, relativistic, and nihilistic; it develops into a kind of illusionism in which it undermines itself; it gives rise to the nominalistic and singularistic mentalities; its science and philosophy, pseudo-religion and ethics are of a utilitarian, hedonistic, pragmatic, operational, and instrumental character. The ideational system of truth, the very opposite of the sensate system, is based on revelation, divine inspiration, and mystic experience: its mentality is dedicated to the eternal verities; reality is viewed as spiritual or nonmaterial; it is absolutistic, nonutilitarian, and nonpragmatic. The idealistic system of truth, blending the three distinct elements of sensory, religious, and rationalistic truth, occupies an intermediary position between the ideational and sensate systems. "The systems of Plato and Aristotle, of Albertus Magnus and Saint Thomas Aquinas, are the supreme examples, attempting to embrace in one organic whole divine as well as sensory and dialectic truth" (p. 102).

A study of the rhythm of domination of systems of truth in history leads to this formulation of the reason for the oscillations: "No single system comprises the whole of truth; nor is it, on the other hand, entirely false" (p. 104). Each source of knowledge—the senses, reason, and intuition—affords a genuine cognition of the manifold reality. Dr. Sorokin believes that the contemporary one-sided empirico-sensory mentality is failing, due to seeds of decay inherent in the system from the very first. The crisis of the sensate system of truth is at once theoretical and practical. The theoretical phase is revealed first in a progressive obliteration of the boundary line between sensory truth and falsehood, reality and fiction, validity and utilitarian convention, a trend which explains the growth of skeptical philosophies during the past three centuries. The relativism of sensate truth leads to the complete annulment of the fundamental difference between truth and error. The temporalistic character of the truth of the senses produces similar results; and its materialism undermines the system both theoretically and practically. We have only to survey the current scientific conceptions of man as a sort of "electron-proton complex," "a reflex mechanism," or "a psychoanalytical libido,"

to understand the practical effects of this materialism. Sensory science has further undermined itself through a thin and narrow empiricism divorced from other social values—religion, goodness, beauty, and the like. Its enormous and complicated assortment of facts, unwieldily to distraction, has distinctly impaired our understanding of reality, and with that, our certainty. The increasing sterility of sensory science, especially in the social and related sciences, is, in the opinion of the author, a result of this decadent sensism. So much for the failure of the sensate system in its theoretical aspects. The practical failure of the culture is demonstrated by our increasing inability to control mankind and the course of the socio-cultural processes. "Western culture is at the crossroads. It must either cling to its outmoded unilateral conception of truth or else correct its one-sidedness by reintroducing other systems" (p. 131).

"The Crisis in Ethics and Law" is the burden of the next chapter. Ideational ethical norms are regarded as revealed by, or emanating from, the Absolute, therefore as absolute, unconditional, unchangeable, and eternal. The sensate system of ethics regards sensory happiness, pleasure, utility, and comfort, in their refined or unrefined forms, as the supreme values. Idealistic ethics perceives the highest value in God or the super-sensory Absolute; and it views positively those sensory values that are the noblest and that do not militate against the Absolute. Dr. Sorokin illustrates these systems by various selections from great ethical thinkers and shows how, in the course of the history of Greco-Roman and Western culture, these values have fluctuated in their domination. Diagrams and statistical tables are added to demonstrate the relative variations of the ethics of love, of principles, and of happiness. A similar procedure is followed with regard to the systems of law, so that we are led to conclude that the essence of the crisis consists in a progressive devaluation of our ethics and of the norms of our law.

Stripping man of his divine charisma and grace, sensate mentality, ethics, and law, have reduced him to a mere electron-proton complex or reflex mechanism devoid of any sanctity or end-value. . . . Without a shift towards ideational ethics and law, without a new absolutization and universalization of the values, they cannot escape from this blind alley (pp. 164-165).

In an attempt to unfold further "all the disastrous consequences of the moral atomism and ethical cynicism of our overripe sensate mentality," Dr. Sorokin devotes the two succeeding chapters to the crisis of contractual family, government, economic organization, liberty, and international relations, and the prevalence of criminality, war, revolution, suicide, mental disease, and impoverishment in the crisis period. In the first of these chapters, he explains familistic, contractual, and compulsory relationships, traces the rise of contractualism in modern society with the sensate culture,

and shows its malignant effects upon our political institutions and relationships, economics, the family, and international relationships. In a sensate society, contractualism brought about skepticism concerning God and His justice, disbelief in any absolute, sacred norms, a moral "atomism" and cynicism, and an irresistible penchant for money, wealth, profit, pleasures, and sensory happiness. To rehabilitate a society torn asunder by these influences, there is needed a "preliminary reconstruction of absolute moral values and norms, with their *dura lex sed lex* obligatory for all, universally binding, not to be brushed aside in the interest of relative, expedient pseudo-values. . . . It means the replacement of sensate mentality by an ideational or idealistic *Weltanschauung*" (p. 203).

Chapter Six deals with criminality, war, revolution, suicide, mental disease, and impoverishment, as the symptoms and consequences of the modern crisis. In the pursuit of the sensate culture, man moved from the balance of early sensatism to the unbalance of late and semisensile sensation; sound utilitarianism and eudaemonism were superseded by the rule of unrestrained brute force and cruelty. The upshot of this is that we face what the author terms "the bloodiest crisis of the bloodiest century." After a statistical corroboration of his thesis which indicates the trends in all the above-named fields of social disorganization, Dr. Sorokin concludes:

Thus, within three or four decades, dying sensate culture had scrapped the material well-being and other values created during the four preceding centuries. Man sits amid the ruins of his erstwhile splendid social edifice, surrounded—both literally and figuratively—by a ghastly array of corpses (p. 239).

The next chapter concerns itself with the tragic dualism, chaotic syncretism, quantitative colossalism, and diminishing creativeness of the contemporary sensate culture. In the opinion of the author these are symptoms of the disintegration of any socio-cultural system. The tragic dualism is contained in the central self-contradiction of our sensate culture: it simultaneously is a culture of man's glorification and of man's degradation. An examination of the main compartments of our culture—science, philosophy, fine arts, ethics, and law—shows this dualism to be eating away our cultural values.

We aspire for happiness; and prepare wretchedness for ourselves. The more we try to improve our well-being, the more we lose our peace of mind, without which no happiness is possible. . . . We eulogize love, and cultivate hatred. We proclaim man sacred, and slaughter him pitilessly. We proclaim peace, and wage war . . . (p. 247).

The all-pervading syncretism of Western sensate culture is reflected in our mentality, in our beliefs, ideas, tastes, aspirations, and convictions. Dr. Sorokin likens our culture to a vast cultural dumping place where everything is dumped without any restriction. "It has lost its own physiognomy, its

own soul, and its discriminative ability" (p. 250). In a culture so degenerate, quantitative colossalism tends to become the criterion of any great value. "The bigger the better" is the accepted norm of progress, and qualitative standards go by the board. With this emphasis on the bigger instead of the better, there comes a progressive decline of the constructive creativeness. A survey of theological, ethical, and juridical creativeness indicates a decided decrease in recent decades, as does a glance at the fields of science, music, literature, the theater and drama, painting and sculpture, the humanistic and social-science disciplines.

Sensate Western culture and society are given a categoric ultimatum: either persist on the road of overripe sensate culture and go to ruin, to a life uncreative, devoid of any genius, painful, and inglorious; or shift, while there is still a possibility of doing so, to another road of ideational or idealistic culture (p. 271).

A still more sweeping conclusion to the researches of the preceding chapters can be adequately expressed only in the author's own words:

The sensate phase wrote truly the most magnificent page in the whole history of mankind and culture. In this sense it discharged its greatest mission faithfully and fruitfully. Now it is tired and exhausted. It deserves a rest. It should hand on the torch of creativeness to other forms of culture. While it is resting, the ideational and idealistic cultures will carry on the great creative mission of mankind. When these in turn are tired, then the rested sensate culture will again rise and will take the torch from the tired grasp of the fatigued cultures. And so the creative mission of mankind will go on and on to the end—if there is an end (p. 271).

The eighth chapter, entitled "The Present Phase of American Culture," aims to show the similarity of European and American social and cultural trends, with a view to diagnosing the contemporary crisis in more particular terms. It is the contention of Dr. Sorokin that, in spite of some three or four centuries of geographical separation, there has been for a long time and still is only one culture, the Euro-American culture, identical on both continents in all its essential traits. Proofs of this thesis are adduced from consideration of the economic and political fields, social relationships, vital processes, and the movements of the population, social mobility, science, philosophy, and the fine arts. This identity of culture leads to the conclusion of the author that since European and American cultures are one and indivisible Euro-American culture, they are at the same stage of development, namely, at the twilight of the declining sensate phase.

The final chapter of the book attempts an outline of the meaning of the disintegration of sensate culture and an indication of the way out of the present crisis. Dr. Sorokin quite emphatically maintains that the decline of sensate culture does not mean a physical disappearance of the Western population, but rather a progressively increasing defection of this population from sensate culture in favor of other forms of culture; it does not mean the

total destruction of all the vehicles and instrumentalities of our contemporary culture, but that these vehicles will progressively cease to be the servants of sensate values; it does not mean either deterioration or disintegration of our total culture, but only of the sensate supersystem and its subordinated systems of meanings and values. "Instead of the 'death of Western culture and society,' our conception embraces only an end to one of the phases of its supersystem and a shift to another phase, fuller and less one-sided; possibly neo-ideational, if not neo-idealistic" (p. 306). The vital question is, how can the transition be made as painless as possible? The first step entails as wide, as deep, and as prompt a realization as possible of the extraordinary character of the contemporary crisis of our culture and society. Secondly, there must be an unequivocal recognition that the sensate culture is not the only great form of culture. Third, a given culture, in order to maintain its creative life, must shift to another basic form of culture—in our case, from the agonizing sensate to the ideational or the idealistic or integral. Fourth, the deepest re-examination of the main premises and values of sensate culture, with rejection of its pseudo-values and reassertion of its real values, is required. Fifth, the transformation must be followed by a corresponding transformation of social relationships and forms of social organization. There must be a change of the whole mentality and attitudes in the direction of the norms prescribed in the Sermon on the Mount. The proposed remedy is based upon the sociological induction which can be reduced to this formula: Crisis—ordeal—catharsis—charisma—resurrection. It means a fundamental reorientation of values, a thorough-going change of mentality and conduct, a persistent personal effort to realize man's divine creative mission on earth. "Let us hope," the author concludes, "that the grace of understanding may be vouchsafed us and that we may choose, before it is too late, the right road—the road that leads not to death but to the further realization of man's unique creative mission on this planet! *Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini*" (p. 326).

* * *

The Crisis of Our Age is a remarkable book. And it is a very difficult book to review. In saying this, the reviewer in no wise depreciates the author or publisher. As a matter of fact, he commends both for their courage in presenting this volume to the public. It takes considerable literary fortitude to attempt the condensation of a monumental, four-volume work such as the *Social and Cultural Dynamics* into a comparatively small book of three hundred pages; to transpose the measured language of the parent work into the vernacular of the casual, though penetrating, reader; and thereby to run the risk of being thought superficial, incomplete, and propagandistic. The author explains in his preface that the book represents in a modified form a series of public lectures, and is based on the *Social*

and *Cultural Dynamics*. The fact that the lectures were a medium between the larger work and the present volume explains, to a large extent, the style and presentation of the thesis. Of necessity there must be, on the lecture platform and in the non-technical book, an appeal to the catch-phrase, the extreme example, the forceful expression, as well as considerable repetition of the underlying theme. To a certain extent, all these are present in *The Crisis of Our Age*; and not a few students of the social scene will consider them literary liabilities if their acquaintance with Dr. Sorokin is limited to this one book. It becomes increasingly clear then, that the reviewer who is familiar with the *Social and Cultural Dynamics*, and has, for that reason, a prejudice, is torn between two alternatives. Should he review *The Crisis of Our Age* as it stands, prescindng from his knowledge of the *Dynamics*; or should he allow the larger work to throw light upon the obscurities and supplement the lacunae discernible in the abridgement? The latter course seems eminently more fair to the author and his thesis; so notwithstanding the potential protests of those readers who will go no further than the *Crisis*, that procedure will be followed.

After one has turned but a few pages of the volume, it becomes quite obvious that Dr. Sorokin is not merely initiating a quest; rather he is recapitulating one. He is not seeking a theory; he has one. And it is this: the culture patterns of civilization may be distinguished into three forms or supersystems, the sensate, the ideational, and the idealistic; and the history of culture trends is a study of the rise and fall of these dominant forms of culture. All signs point to the disintegration of the sensate form in contemporary society. Thus the crisis. But that is no reason for refuge in the defeatist, Spenglerian "decline of the West," hypothesis. We may, with more than wishful thinking, expect and prepare for a new, a better, society, based upon the ideational or idealistic form.

Because he begins with a thesis, and especially because he begins with this thesis, Dr. Sorokin immediately arouses the ire of some of his brethren in social science, the inductive sociologists. His work in *The Crisis*, and in the *Dynamics* too, is summarily discounted because, as they aver, he is proceeding on a preconceived notion, an unholy bias which vitiates his research. This gratuitous assertion cannot be refuted adequately from *The Crisis*. However, in his preface to the *Dynamics*, Dr. Sorokin explains his method of study. He follows a combination of what he calls the logico-meaningful and the causal-functional methods. "It gives full freedom to logical thought—generalizing and analytical—and, at the same time, it tests its deductions inductively by the relevant empirical facts" (Vol. I, xi). Such a combination appears to him to be the only sound approach in the social sciences. The purely inductive sociologists will not concede this, and herein lies the root of their opposition to the Sorokin culture theory. They cannot adequately refute Dr. Sorokin, nor can they be

properly refuted, until the criteriological problem be first resolved, and the merits of induction and deduction as means of knowledge be evaluated.

The next point of issue concerns the validity and significance of the empirical data assembled by the author in support of his thesis. In *The Crisis of Our Age*, the reader is treated to a variety of graphs, tables, and diagrams illustrating the trends in artistic style and subjects, the number of scientific discoveries and technological inventions, the rise and fall and relative importance of systems of truth, the waves of criminality, war, suicide, revolution, etc. The question might well occur: what one man could possibly chart the courses of such intangibles or variables, and over such a great expanse of centuries? And furthermore, assuming that the research could be done, what real value do the tables and graphs have? Is it not falling into the very error the author condemns, namely, measuring spiritual and moral values by a sensate yardstick? In answer to the first difficulty, we might allude to the author's preface to the *Social and Cultural Dynamics*. There he states that the main body of materials was collected, not by himself, but by various scholars each working independently without knowledge either of the objective for which the data were needed, or of his theories. The second difficulty is less easy to resolve. Here the aforementioned preface again enlightens. Dr. Sorokin admits that complete data often do not exist, that the larger the problems and the field studied, the greater is the probability of error. But as he well points out: "The point is not the mere presence of shortcomings, but how great they are in comparison with those in other treatises of the kind and to what extent they affect the soundness of the major contentions" (Vol. I, xii). Without a doubt, the critical scholar of general or particularized histories will find places of disagreement in the plotting and analysis of cultural trends; but are these differences great enough to vitiate the major theme?

The Thomist can well concur with Dr. Sorokin in his characterization of modern culture as sensate and disintegrating; he may even be flattered to learn that St. Thomas Aquinas is cited by the author as the great teacher of the idealistic system, which is the most integrated and realistic of the cultural forms. Dr. Sorokin's exposition of St. Thomas' doctrine on truth is contained in the *Dynamics*. However, one wonders if in presenting the systems of truth in *The Crisis*, the author does not sacrifice accuracy to popularity. To adduce St. Paul's statement, "the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God," as a formulation of the ideational principle which regards the truth of the senses and the sensory knowledge gained from it as nothing but foolishness, is rather poor exegesis. The Pauline synthesis is vastly broader than that of Tertullian, whom the author more correctly cites as a type of ideationalist. A more serious difficulty is encountered in Dr. Sorokin's explanation of the sources of knowledge—the senses, reason, and intuition. His notion of intuition is particularly difficult to grasp.

At times it appears it is based on revelation, divine inspiration, and mystic experience, and as such it is the basis of the ideational system; and yet when the author speaks of the importance of intuitional cognition (p. 105 ff.) as lying at the roots of any science, the initial impulse to an enormous number of sensory and dialectic discoveries, it is obviously not to be taken for revelation. It was the genius of St. Thomas that he distinguished clearly between the provinces of natural and supernatural truth. It is sincerely to be hoped that Dr. Sorokin will further avail himself of the wisdom of the Angelic Doctor in this matter of forms and means of attaining truth.

There are two other difficulties to which the reviewer wishes to confess. One has to do with Dr. Sorokin's estimate of the sensate culture. As he presents it under the aspects of a supersystem, it seems to afford a form of society based on sensory reality to the exclusion of supersensory reality, which, admittedly, is superior in importance for true culture. And yet the writer, recapitulating the influence of the sensate form, says: "The sensate phase wrote truly the most magnificent page in the whole history of mankind and culture" (p. 271). If culture is taken in the material sense, the statement may perhaps be conceded; but if more enduring values, truth, ethics, moral ideals, be the criteria of culture, the proposition is somewhat bewildering. The other difficulty may likely be only a vague fear, but there is cause to be concerned over the possibility that this cyclical theory of Sorokin may be taken too literally and applied too rigorously, not only to the cultural trends of the past but also as a deterministic charting of the course for the future. The very fact that Dr. Sorokin does not make an attempt to outline in any detail the course of future history is, in itself, a guarantee that he would avoid the errors of Hegel and Marx and Spengler.

The cardinal thesis of *The Crisis of Our Age*, so expertly presented and attended by such voluminous data, is staggering in its breadth and depth. It should be the basis for prolific social research along all the lines indicated by the author. But *The Crisis of Our Age* is an introduction, nothing more. Taken alone, it is apt to appear too simple to be true. This volume should lead the reader to the larger *Social and Cultural Dynamics*, where a more balanced, a more comprehensive exposition is to be found. It is very much to be feared that if *The Crisis* alone is read, the scholar will suffer the chagrin akin to that of the dinner guest who is served the entree but misses the main course.

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The Intent of the Critic. By EDMUND WILSON, NORMAN FOERSTER, JOHN CROWE RANSOM, W. H. AUDEN. Edited, with an introduction, by DONALD A. STAUFFER. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941. Pp. 147. \$2.50.

The Novel and Society. By N. ELIZABETH MONROE. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1941. Pp. 282, with index. \$3.00.

The Mind of the Maker. By DOROTHY L. SAYERS. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1941. Pp. xiv + 229. \$2.00.

The Intent of the Critic was planned as a companion to *The Intent of the Artist*, previously published by the same firm. One's first impression, after comparing the book with its precursor, is that the critic is much more articulate than the artist in trying to express his purpose. This is to be expected, for the critic is more at home in analysis. Four outstanding critics were asked to contribute to this work; they were chosen because of their distinctive critical approaches to literature—historical (Wilson), ethical (Foerster) esthetic (Ransom), social (Auden). The introduction was written by Donald A. Stauffer. It is extremely interesting and should be read last, or at least reread at the end.

"The Historical Interpretation of Literature" is Edmund Wilson's contribution. Wilson is looked upon as one of the outstanding literary critics. From the evidence of this piece we are somewhat skeptical. He does give a clear exposition of the various historical approaches to literature that are common today—social, economic, and psychological (Freudian). These tend to explain the genesis and meaning of the work of literature. They are not literary criticism. "No matter how thorough and complete our explanations of works of literature may be from the historical and biographical points of view, we must be ready to try to estimate the relative degrees of success attained by the products of the various periods and the various personalities . . ." (p. 57). By what criterion shall we judge a work of literature? Wilson's is entirely pragmatic—literature gives relief to the tension aroused by the strangeness of life's tensions. "This relief that brings the sense of power, and with the sense of power, joy, is the emotion which tells us when we are in the presence of a first-rate piece of literature" (p. 61). There is an obvious objection to such a criterion and Wilson does not overlook it; there are many who find relief from life's tensions in the trashiest sort of writing. In answer to this objection Wilson appeals to the experience of the more highly organized man who has a wider intellectual range. Nevertheless, "The difference between the emotion of the more highly organized man and the emotion of the less highly organized one is merely a matter of gradation" (p. 61). In other words, Wilson's criterion of literary excellence is purely subjective. However, there is some gain when a man of Wilson's prominence admits the limitations of historical criticism.

"The Esthetic Judgment and the Ethical Judgment" is the title of Norman Foerster's contribution. He immediately makes an important distinction between literary criticism and general criticism. "An essential task of the literary critic is to contemplate, analyze, and judge a literary work as a work of art, as a thing of beauty, in its esthetic character" (p. 69). In most of the arts, criticism is confined to the esthetic; in literature, however, criticism is as often ethical as esthetic. The reason for this Foerster finds in the articulateness of literature. What he means is that the literary artist more clearly expresses his philosophy of life and his judgments of value in his work than other artists do. He insists that the ultimate critical judgment on a piece of literature must take into consideration the ethical content as well as the esthetic means of the production. What Foerster says is undoubtedly true, especially with regard to contemporary literature, which, to a large extent, has fallen off from the traditional aims of literature. Literature, as a fine art, has always aimed at the production of beauty, which, when contemplated, gives pleasure. Today, the aim seems to be rather a criticism of life, a wordy struggle with life's problems. Often enough the author leaves his readers in utter darkness; too often he arrives at a very facile and very dangerous solution. In such cases a nice dissection of the esthetic beauties in an author's style is a waste of time. Beauty is too precious a thing to be wasted on trivialities. Beauty herself grows pale when forced to associate with morbidity. Beauty is not a pure quality that can be attached to anything; it must be founded in truth and goodness, although it adds to these a distinct grace and makes them pleasing to contemplate.

In "Criticism as Pure Speculation," John Crowe Ransom attacks the problem of esthetic criticism. He would confine literary criticism to esthetic criticism. He rejects both psychologistic and ethical criticism. His condemnation of psychologistic criticism is well merited. As he points out, the psychologistic school holds that poetry is addressed primarily to the feelings and motor impulses; it almost severs the dependence of poetic effect upon any standard of objective knowledge and belief, reducing poetry to a form of "expression." Ransom prefers to attend "to the poetic object and let the feelings take care of themselves."

As moralistic critics he cites the Neo-Humanists and the Marxists. Such criticism, he maintains, is inadequate to get at the poet's intention. Moralistic critics wish to isolate and discuss the "ideology" of the poet, not the poem itself. From this viewpoint, Ransom is, of course, right. It is noteworthy that he confines his attention to poetry rather than the novel. His point has more weight thereby. However, he does not exclude ethical criticism; he does think that what is needed is better esthetic criticism. This does not lead him to defend the maxim of "Art for art's sake." In fact, he states the case perfectly when he says that "Art is post-ethical

rather than unethical." If we could always feel assured of the validity of the moral choices of the poet, we could confine ourselves to the pleasurable contemplation of the poem.

The primary problem of the esthetic critic is the answer to the question, what is a poem? "The ostensible substance of the poem may be anything at all which words may signify: an ethical situation, a passion, a train of thought, a flower or landscape, a thing. This substance receives its poetic increment. It might be safer to say it receives some subtle and mysterious alteration under poetic treatment, but I will risk the cruder formula: the ostensible substance is increased by an x , which is an increment. The poem actually continues to contain its ostensible substance, which is not fatally diminished from its prose state; that is its logical core, or paraphrase. The rest of the poem is x , which we are to find" (pp. 105-106).

As a first step to finding x , Mr. Ransom quotes a passage from *Macbeth*. He justly points out that the impact of the passage is not due to its prose argument, but rather to the numerous details that are added to the argument. "From the point of view of the philosopher they are excursions into particularity" (p. 107). This contrast of the logical structure and the local context ("excursions into particularity") is of utmost importance to Ransom's theory of poetry. Unfortunately, he has been led astray by the words universal and particular. "For many years I had seen . . . that a poem as a discourse differentiated itself from prose by its particularity, yet not to the point of sacrificing its logical cogency or universality. But I could get no further. I could not see how real particularity could get into a universal" (p. 109). So he came to the conclusion that the poetic increment is "local and irrelevant," divorced more or less from the logical structure. "Suppose the logical substance remained there all the time, and was in no way specially remarkable, while the particularity came in by accretion, so that the poem turned out partly universal, and partly particular, but with respect to different parts" (p. 110). This is an easy way out of the difficulty, but obviously a false way out. It is the very particularity of the poem that makes for universality. The prose argument of *Hamlet* has no universal appeal, is in fact practically unintelligible apart from the individual, Hamlet. Hamlet is an understandable human being as Lincoln is an understandable human being. There is a difference, of course: Lincoln is what he is, under the grace of God, by his own efforts; Hamlet is what he is by the genius of Shakespeare. To both Lincoln and Shakespeare we owe admiration and gratitude, to the one for being, to the other for creating, a great human individual. In many of Shakespeare's plays there are irrelevant particularities, but they are not his greatest plays.

W. H. Auden's "Criticism in a Mass Society" is a well-reasoned discussion of the function of criticism in a democratic society. Auden makes a

distinction between closed and open societies. In a closed society there is little variety in the experiences of individuals and all things are accomplished according to tradition. By tradition Auden here means the conviction that the right thing to do is inseparable from the right way of doing it. In an open society there is great diversity of experience and a tendency to over-emphasize individuality. Democracy is, of course, an open society. Therefore, the task of the critic is twofold: he must show the individual his place in the cultural unity; and he must spread a knowledge of past cultures (a valid traditionalism). In this way the critic can root out one of the great dangers in a mass society, wherein "the great majority prefer opinion to knowledge, and passively allow the former to be imposed upon them by a centralized few" (p. 127). Greater knowledge and communication are the best checks on authoritarian control.

In his introduction, D. H. Stauffer first of all discusses literary criticism in general, and then points out some of the divergences and agreements that can be found among the four contributors. In his own right he has made some interesting points. In his opinion the critic plays three roles: a) as an individual responding to the work of art; b) as an interpreter to an audience; c) finally, as a judge. "The first quality of a literary critic is the natural endowment for responding, intuitively and in his own person, to works of art" (p. 7). If his primary concern is not the work of art itself, he is not an ideal critic. While the work of art is self-sufficient, it is not self-explanatory. The reader may not be able to call up sufficient skill to fully appreciate the work alone; the critic then tries to improve the reader, make him responsive to the work of art. In what is probably the most intelligible statement in the whole book, Stauffer explains this second function of the critic. "In the intent of his creations, the literary artist belongs near the angelic order; his intelligence (at least his mode of expression) is marked by intuitive rather than by discursive reason. Discursive thoughts may have entered into his creation, but the whole effect of the finished work of art as art is that of a single immediate intuition. In making it comprehensible to the ordinary reader, who almost certainly is not living in a state of inspiration, the critic therefore must usually translate its flash of insight back into the light of common day by utilizing the resources of discursive reasoning" (pp. 20-21). We hope that Mr. Stauffer will expand that statement sometime in the near future.

All of the writers will agree with another fine statement by Mr. Stauffer, with which we will close our discussion of *The Intent of the Critic*: "And finally, no man is a literary critic, excellent though he may be as esthetician, scholar, or creative artist, in whose writings our primary pleasure does not spring from seeing specific works of art more clearly, easily, or completely" (p. 25).

In the light of that last statement of Mr. Stauffer, we must admit that Miss N. Elizabeth Monroe is an excellent literary critic. She has chosen for her study of *The Novel and Society* the writings of Sigrid Undset, Selma Lagerlof, Virginia Woolf, Ellen Glasgow, Edith Wharton, and Willa Cather. As one reads the chapters dedicated to these writers, one is awakened to a deeper appreciation of the particular novels one has read and caught by a desire to read those as yet unread.

In her discussion of the modern novel, Miss Monroe is severely critical. To the insensitive her book may seem mere Catholic propaganda; actually her appeal to Aristotelian and Catholic principles is made in the name of art and not on behalf of religion itself. She has shown clearly enough that most of our popular novelists are quite incapable of treating adequately the great themes that modern life presents to them. They are weak in form, in substance, in ideas and ideals; they are stricken with the very diseases they diagnose with nauseating detail. Their preoccupation is with their own individual impressions and personal reactions, which they unfold as representative. Most authors are either riding a theory or are incapable of theory, consciously shunning theory. In either case their preoccupations are with other things than writing great novels.

Miss Monroe is certain that a return to traditional principles is the only cure for the weaknesses of the modern novel. This is not a demand for moralism or religiosity in the novel. The full acceptance of the religious viewpoint, even of the dogmatically religious viewpoint, will free, not hamper, the efforts of a novelist. "A religious man becomes subjective only when he is not an artist but must turn to his beliefs for his subject matter, or when he becomes so ardent in the cause of spreading his beliefs that he neglects art entirely. This is due not to too much religion but to too little art" (p. 28).

We do not wish to create the impression that Miss Monroe has written a blanket condemnation of the modern novel. She has conscientiously given credit wherever it was due. She would have produced a more perfect piece of literary criticism had the novels she considered been more nearly works of art. Unfortunately, they have been written with preoccupations that have weakened their artistic value. It is against this weakness that Miss Monroe has successfully written.

* * *

Dorothy L. Sayers is a writer of mystery stories; we need not be surprised then to find that in *The Mind of the Maker* she is concerned with a mystery, the mystery, no less, of the Trinity. This is a book that should have been written; in substance it has been written before, by St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas.

It is most important to grasp Miss Sayers' intention. She has chosen certain portions of the Christian creed, theological statements that purport

to be statements of fact about the nature of God and the world. "The point I shall endeavor to establish is that these statements about God the Creator are not, as is usually supposed, a set of arbitrary mystifications irrelevant to human life and thought. On the contrary, whether or not they are true about God, they are, when examined in the light of direct experience, seen to be plain witnesses of truth about the nature of the creative mind as such and as we know it" (p. xiii). In other words, Miss Sayers attempts to trace the image of the Trinity in the mind of the creative artist.

We should be most happy to report that Miss Sayers' courageous venture is completely successful. We are well aware that the richness of the divine life cannot be embraced within one set of analogies. Miss Sayers' explanations of the Trinity are not traditional; they do not take into consideration the Scriptural hints as to the inner meaning of the Three Persons of the Trinity, hints that have been utilized by Augustine and others. That is, in itself, not condemnation of Miss Sayers. However, we feel that her explanation of the human creative process would have benefited by a deeper penetration of the traditional analogies. According to St. Augustine (and there is adequate scriptural basis for his interpretations), God the Father is the substantial principle of the Deity, God the Son is the Eternal Idea or Image of the Father, God the Holy Ghost is the substantial Love of the Father and the Son. According to Miss Sayers, the personal traits are rather Idea, Energy, and Power. In scrutinizing the creative process of the writer the application of these three show some weaknesses. A deeper penetration of the theological explanations would have clarified the artistic analogies. After all, the theological analogies were illuminated to a great extent by the introspections of great creative writers.

Apart from the theological weaknesses, the book is a treasury of wise observations on the mind of the creative artist. Perhaps it will serve as an inspiration to other writers to present the traditional dogmas of Christianity under new dialectical forms. The world is before us; it can easily be drawn up into the unity of the Triune God, while preserving its own uniqueness.

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The Philosophy of Edmund Husserl. The Origin and Development of His Phenomenology. By E. PARL WELCH. New York: Columbia University Press, 1941. Pp. xxiv + 337.

It is difficult to report on a book which is itself a report on other books and works. A summary of the contents in such a case amounts to a small-

scale reproduction of the author's summary and is the less informative the more objective the author's report is. There can be no doubt that Husserl's philosophy deserves more attention than it has found, on the average, with American philosophers until now. The reasons for this are partly the lack of translations, the difficulty of the matter, and an unawareness of the influence this philosophy has exercised on many thinkers (in Europe, and also in Latin America), partly the reluctance which many show to consider any philosophy avowedly "non-scientific." A recent review of a volume of essays in commemoration of Husserl stated bluntly that this philosophy was not worth considering, since it appeals to "intuition," instead of to methods in accordance with the scientific spirit. Unfortunately this review overlooked the fact that Husserl did not want to replace scientific observation and method by intuition in the field of science, but that he denied the legitimacy of such methods in the field of philosophy. Whatever the result may be, it ought to be worth while at least to find out why a mind as penetrating as Husserl's, and one moreover schooled in mathematics, assumes such a position.

Mr. Welch attempts to clarify the way Husserl went from his first great work on the Philosophy of Arithmetic to his later and latest writings on pure philosophy. He sees in Husserl mainly a student of epistemology and logic, not a philosopher concerned with the ultimate problems of ontology or metaphysics. In fact, most of Husserl's writings deal, at least at the surface, with logical and epistemological problems. But back of his views there is also a metaphysical conception which would have become more manifest to Mr. Welch had he taken more account of the *Méditations Cartésiennes*; he concentrates, however, chiefly on the *Logische Untersuchungen* and the *Ideas* (trans. by Boyce Gibson); the *Formale und transzendente Logik*, of 1929, is also insufficiently considered.

The author, although fairly well acquainted with his matter, sometimes fails in his understanding of the text. The translation of several passages is, to say the least, inaccurate. This has been pointed out by D. Cairns, in a review of an older work by Mr. Welch (*Edmund Husserl's Phenomenology*, Univ. of Southern California Studies, 1939; v. *Phil. and Phenomenological Research*, 1941, 2., 232-237). Because of this inaccuracy the author attributes to Husserl notions this philosopher hardly would have held and surely did not express in his works.

It would take too long to quote particular instances of such misunderstandings, since this demands a comparison of Mr. Welch's interpretation and Husserl's own statements. Mr. Welch, however, has enlarged on his prior work by contributing a part dealing with "Five Questions concerning Phenomenology" (pp. 207-300). In this part he no longer merely reports but tries to develop some views of his own. In so far as these views refer to his interpretation of phenomenology, they are, of course, beside the point;

as his personal philosophy, they deserve the attention we owe to any sincere effort.

The five questions are on (1) The Problem of Error in Phenomenology; (2) Phenomenology and Scholasticism; (3) The Relation of Husserl and Kant; (4) Phenomenology and Realism; (5) Phenomenology as a Science. Of these questions, the second seems particularly interesting.

This question is treated on about five pages. It is Mr. Welch's intention to defend Husserl against "one of the most common, yet erroneous, charges," that his philosophy is but a revival or continuation of Scholasticism. That phenomenology does not stand in the line of Aristotelian-Thomistic metaphysics is true, but neither is the alleged Scholastic philosophy to which the author compares phenomenology to be found in the classical texts. Thus the author attributes to Aquinas a notion of *intentio secunda*, which is not at all Thomistic. Or: "The faculty for directing itself to the universal he (Aquinas) called the *intellectus agens*." "With the Scholastics, the Idea is known in the *secunda intentio*." Incidentally, it would have been advisable to consult, in writing this chapter, E. Stein's article on Thomas and Husserl.

There is a useful although incomplete bibliography of 25 pages. Sofia Vanni-Rovighi's *La Filosofia di Edmund Husserl* (Milan: Publ. dell' Univ. Cattol. del S. Cuore, 1939) is not listed; the perusal of this book might have helped the author to understand better the relations of phenomenology and Scholasticism, as well as phenomenology itself. Especially, the metaphysical background becomes visible in Dr. Rovighi's study, while it is neglected by the author.

Notwithstanding its many deficiencies, Mr. Welch's work deserves attention and may prove useful, at least by way of pointing out some fundamentals of phenomenology. It does not give a complete and accurate account of Husserl's philosophy. Mr. Welch, however, is probably right in placing this philosophy close to Platonism, although the "existence" of Ideas is conceived differently by Plato and by Husserl. Husserl tried indeed to break through the barrier which separates the world of ideas, or any world of states of consciousness, however pure, from real existence. But it does not seem that he succeeded better than many a "Realist" does, once he has placed himself on the standpoint of the Cartesian *cogito*. To phenomenology applies, it would seem, the criticism brought forth by E. Gilson (*Réalisme Thomiste et Critique de la Connaissance*. Paris: Vrin, 1939). On the other hand, it is correct to say that Husserl's endeavors have a great importance because they clear the way for, though perhaps they do not achieve, the re-establishing of metaphysical thought and the overthrow of crude sensationalism and naturalism.

Although this book is not a very reliable guide through the intricacies of phenomenology, it may incite curiosity, point out certain problems, and

further the interest in the philosophy of a man who seriously, honestly, and profoundly wrestled with the eternal problems of the human mind. Even if scientific narrowmindedness is incapable of grasping the importance of Husserl's work, it is sure that it will be recorded, by the history of philosophy, as at least a powerful factor, if not a decisive one, in the change of philosophical thought which is becoming more and more visible and which, at least one may hope so, will distinguish the late twentieth century from the immediate past and present.

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BRIEF NOTICES

Cosmology. By D. NYS. Translation and Adaptation by S. A. Raemers. Milwaukee: Bruce, 1942. Vol. I. Pp. 299, with index. \$3.00; Vol. II. Pp. 449, with index. \$4.25. Set \$7.00.

To anyone acquainted with the revival of Scholastic thought in the recent past the work of Canon Nys needs no introduction. The translation of his great work on *Cosmology* at this time witnesses to the increasing interest that Scholastic philosophy is arousing in America today. One of the outstanding features of these two volumes is the restraint used by the author in his treatment of the subject. The two large volumes are centered around the basic problems of Natural Philosophy; extraneous questions are carefully eschewed. Volume I is devoted entirely to a thorough exposition and appraisal of modern physical theories—mechanism, dynamism, and energism. About half of Volume II is devoted to the traditional explanation of the natural world—hylomorphism. Adequate attention has been paid to the difficulties proposed by modern scientists. The last half of this volume is devoted to Time and Space. Canon Nys' work is by no means the last answer to the whole problem of the relation between science and philosophy. Much work has yet to be done. It is, however, an excellent introduction to the whole cosmological problem.

The Philosophy of Christian Education (Proceedings of the Western Division of the American Catholic Philosophical Association). San Francisco, California, 1941. \$0.75.

Philosophy and Order (Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association, Seventeenth Annual Meeting). Washington, D. C., 1941. \$2.00.

The following is a list of the papers included in the first of these volumes: "The Subject of Education: Man in the Making," P. K. Meagher, O. P.; "The Form of Education: The Liberal Arts," by J. L. Hagerty; "The Ends and Aims of Christian Education," by L. A. Fenn, S. S.; "The Art of Teaching: Its Philosophical Basis," by H. S. Carroll; "The Making of the Mind: The Degrees of Knowledge," by M. Gardner; "The Development of the Will: Is Virtue Teachable?" by F. L. Sheerin, S. J.; "The Aim and Obligation of the School," by Bro. S. Edmund, F. S. C.; "The Idea of a University: Its Function in Education," by K. F. Reinhardt; "The Order of Learning," by M. J. Adler. It is clear at a glance that the program of the Western Divisions' meeting was well integrated. Moreover there is just a touch of imagination in the titles of the various papers. Best of all, there

seems to have been a real effort to make the papers themselves as readable as possible. The result is an interesting book on a very important subject, and not just a series of learned papers.

The papers read at the annual meeting of the American Catholic Philosophical Association are also well integrated. "Order as a Philosophical Problem," by L. R. Ward; "Philosophy and Order in Logic," by J. L. Wellmuth; "Philosophy and Order in Psychology," by E. Salmon; "Philosophy and Order in the Social Sciences," by F. J. Haas; "Philosophy and Order in Politics," by W. Parsons; "Metaphysics and International Order," by C. De Koninck. Also "Man, The Image of God," by Fulton Sheen and "Man's Image of Man," by Walter Lippmann. A full report of the Round Table Discussions is also included.

Robert Grosseteste On Light. Translation with introduction by Clare C. Riedl. (Mediaeval Philosophical Texts in Translation, No. 1.) Milwaukee: The Marquette University Press, 1942. Pp. 17. \$0.50.

There is a great promise in this slight pamphlet of seventeen pages, for it is marked No. 1. A new series, then, is beginning, bearing further testimony to the growing vitality of philosophical scholarship in the United States. The choice of a subject for the first pamphlet is fortunate. Robert Grosseteste stands close to the origins of the Oxford Franciscan school; his influence has been felt, therefore, by Oxford and Franciscan scholars. Roger Bacon considered him the most learned man of his day. He was a scientist as well as a philosopher; his work is characterized "by a blending of philosophy with experimental science." Miss Riedl has given us a short and clear introduction to the thought of Grosseteste, especially concerning his "light metaphysics." The translation is readable; a short bibliography is also included.

St. Thomas and Analogy. By GERALD B. PHELAN. (The Aquinas Lecture, 1941.) Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1941. Pp. 58.

There can be little doubt that the analogical conception of human knowledge is fundamental to the Thomistic synthesis; moreover, it is this same conception that is completely foreign to the minds of modern philosophers and scientists. A glance at any work on semantics shows how difficult it is to explain even language without recognizing analogy. The subject of Dr. Phelan's lecture is, then, timely. Until we can help modern philosophers to understand the value of analogy, our problem of communicating with them will remain insoluble. Within the confines of a professedly popular lecture, not even Dr. Phelan could do more than outline the doctrine of analogy. In the notes appended to the text there are sufficient bibliographical citations to enable the student to deepen his knowledge of the whole question of analogical knowledge.

Philosophical Foundations of Faith. By MARION J. BRADSHAW. New York: Columbia University Press, 1941. Pp. x + 254. \$2.50.

This study of the religious views in the philosophies of Descartes, Hobbes, Locke, Pascal, Spinoza, and Leibniz, established the fact that philosophy alone can never fully satisfy man. Indeed, man has need of revelation in order that he may have a right understanding of life and his eternal destiny. The faith common to all six philosophers is nothing more than an expression of man's need of something more than that which reason can give us, and, more specifically, certain truths to be found in the teachings of Christ. But one looks in vain for anything like accord either as to the nature of God or the divinity of Christ. In brief, this study advocates that there is no such thing as truth or finality on God, Christ, or Christianity. It seeks to prove in terms of six philosophies that the nature and structure of the universe not only justify but demand a religious response on the part of man. It is a discussion of the utility of religion apart from its truth.

Fast by the Road. By JOHN MOODY. New York: Macmillan, 1942. Pp. 308, with index. \$2.50.

John Moody has been a Catholic for ten years. This book is a humorous and enlightening account of what has happened to Mr. Moody during that decade. As a contribution to apologetic literature, its prime value lies in its revelation of the reaction of modern Americans to the inexplicable fact that a man like Mr. Moody was converted to the Catholic Church.

The Dilemma of Science. By WILLIAM M. AGAR. New York: Sheed & Ward, 1941. Pp. 140. \$2.00.

Dr. Agar is professor of geology at Columbia University. The dilemma of science, as he presents it, is this: scientists are becoming more and more conscious that science is not self-sufficient; nevertheless they are unwilling to admit that science is of itself incapable of attaining self-sufficiency. Dr. Agar rightly picks out the problem of knowledge as the basic question between science and philosophy. His analysis, however, addressed to the general reader, is not very profound. Much further work must be done if the divorce between these two forms of human knowledge is to be mended. There is an adequate bibliography for those interested in further reading.

BOOKS RECEIVED

- Albright, W. F. *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1942. Pp. xii + 238, with index. \$2.25.
- Anshen, R. N. (Editor). *Science and Man*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1942. Pp. 494, with index. \$4.00.
- Bryson, L., and Finkelstein, L. (Editors). *Science, Philosophy and Religion*. (Second Symposium.) New York: Conference on Science, Philosophy, and Religion in Relation to the Democratic Way of Life, Inc., 1942. Pp. 558. \$3.00.
- Curtiss, John S. *An Appraisal of the Protocols of Zion*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1942. Pp. 118, with index. \$1.00.
- Deferrari, Roy J. (Editor). *Essays on Catholic Education in the United States*. New Jersey: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1942. Pp. xi + 556. \$4.50.
- Knox, John (Editor). *Religion and the Present Crisis*. (Walgreen Foundation Lectures, 1941-42.) Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942. Pp. xi + 165, with index. \$1.50.
- Kreppe, B. *Die Zweckfrage der Ehe in neuer Beleuchtung*. Einsiedeln: Verlag Benziger, 1941. Pp. 302, with index.
- Pound, Roscoe. *Social Control Through Law*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1942. Pp. 138, with index. \$2.00.
- Reichenbach, Hans. *From Copernicus to Einstein*. New York: Alliance Book Co., 1942. Pp. 123. \$2.00.
- Runes, D. P. (Editor). *Who's Who in Philosophy*. Vol. I: Anglo-American Philosophers. New York: Philosophical Library (Alliance), 1942. Pp. 293. \$4.50.
- Schelling, F. *The Ages of the World*. Trans. with introduction and notes by Frederick de Wolfe Bolman, Jr. New York: Columbia University Press, 1942. Pp. xiii + 251, with index. \$3.00.
- Trueblood, D. E. *The Logic of Belief*. New York: Harper, 1942. Pp. 237, with index. \$2.75.
- von Hildebrand, D. *Marriage*. New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1942. Pp. 64. \$1.25.